

Chapter Six. <i>Siberia</i>	79
Conception of the Plot, Ideas, Generalisations	79
Theme and Plot Cognition of Life and Development of Characters	83
Looking to the Future	91
The Writer's World, His Attachments and Predilections	95
 G. MARKOV <i>ON CRAFTSMANSHIP</i>	 97
A Great Son of the Party and the People On the 75th Birthday of Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev	98
A Land of Wonders	105
In Search of Poetry and Truth	111
Environment, Knowledge, Work	117
Lev Tolstoy and Our Times	126
A Word About Shushkov	141
A Great Artist of Our Day	154
A Maître's Lesson	158
About Konstantin Fedot	163

CHAPTER ONE

SEEKINGS AND ACQUISITIONS

Childhood and Adolescence

"I maintain that for a writer, for his work, a very important role is played by those impressions and that life experience which he acquires in his childhood and adolescence, by the milieu in which he grows up and becomes shaped morally and ideologically. Primary impressions, of course, are always the most memorable."

The emotional experience of childhood and adolescence. The milieu in which one's character and moral convictions are formed. The writer has often repeated in various connections this statement of his. "Everything I have so far written is bound up with my childhood impressions."

There are no few examples in the history of literature of first books inspired by impressions of what the budding writer has read, his own life experience seeming of little interest and import to him. A work like that is fated to remain no more than a literary experiment, for nothing will grow from it.

Lucky is the writer who starts out with a book that is based on his own emotional experience, his private cogitations and conclusions. Authentic, not borrowed, material demands a truthful and accurate rendering for it cannot be at odds with what has actually been and what might have been. And this is where the agony of artistic creation begins, for the material itself compels the young author to painfully seek the means of best expressing that which

father taught him to love and understand the taiga, to appreciate its might, beauty and poetry.

"I grew up in the family of a Siberian hunter," recalls the writer. "And that is why, perhaps, it is not just my parents' house that was home to me but the taiga roots: the Chichkayul, Yuksa, Chulim, Ob, Vasyugan and Irtysh. On the banks of these rivers run many paths and trails trodden by several generations of hunters along which I had also trekked."

From his father young Georgy acquired a taste for a apt word and an appreciation of vivid, original speech. Mokei Frolovich who was passionately fond of nature and was himself, like most hunters, a brilliant storyteller and imaginative narrator, could spin his fascinating yarn till daybreak round a fire, his own experiences being well worth hearing because he had seen a lot of curious things in his life, had been to different parts of the country, and had trekked the length and breadth of the taiga.

"Do you know that Siberia is a land of wonders?" The writer recalls that he first heard these words from his father when he took him, then a lad of eleven or so, on his first squirrel hunt. "Later, when my wanderings brought me to hunters' camps or fishermen's huts I was to hear amazing stories about the wonders of my native land."

Here, he goes on to relate how his father and Melekh Vlosov, another hunter, drinking tea in the warmth and light of a fire, rivalled each other in their knowledge of the taiga. Theirs were remarkable stories told in a pithy, colourful, extraordinarily rich and expressive language, and to be remembered always.

Many years later Markov wrote: "Far be it from me to want to hurt anybody's feelings, but I shall say quite frankly that I don't know any people in any other walk of life whose spoken language would be as expressive and as to the point as the hunters'. I don't know any people in any other walk of life whose imagination would be as fantastic and as down to earth, going in step with life and at the same time anticipating its future."

in the prerevolutionary years, he perused social surveys, read about the settlement of Siberia, about its prisons and places of exile.

Little by little his novel acquired its inner spring, the plot developed logically, the happenings became linked with one another, and the story unfolded unhurriedly into a broad, polyphonic composition. The scenes and episodes he had written "for future use"—nature studies, details of everyday life and of trekking in the tanga, stories told by people sitting by the fire in the forest at night—all came in very useful now.

As editor of *Bolshevistskaya Smena*, Markov had a full-time job, of course. Industrialisation of the country began, and great construction projects were launched, among them the *Bolshoi Kuzbas*.^{*} The influx of young people to Western Siberia was tremendous. Newspapers published articles, stories and reports on progress in general, on how the young workers were adopting themselves and how quickly they were learning to operate the new machinery. News from the construction site of the iron and steel works in Novokuznetsk were awaited as keenly as war communiques. Markov worked slowly and steadily on his novel in what spare time he had between business connected with his newspaper work.

It took him almost eight years with short intervals to complete the first part of *The Strogovs*. This he took the manuscript to Moscow for Pavel Pavlenko, a well-known writer, to read. Pavlenko gave it a comment, and to the young author he confessed that for all my experience I was still a beginner. "Because I found no inaccuracies in your thought we were of the same age, even my senior."

Later, Goslitizdat informed Markov that his novel had been read by Isaac Babel, and next

^{*}A big coalfield development and the iron and steel works in Novokuznetsk.—*IT*.

He now had the ending to his story. The first excerpt from it appeared in print already in October of that year but Markov felt that the story as a whole was not yet ready for publication. He continued working on it after he was demobbed, and it was only in 1948 that the story *A Foot-Soldier* (later re-named *Eagles Over the Khingan*) appeared in full in the journal *Sibirskoye Ogní* and after that was brought out in book form by a publishing house in Irkutsk.

The Battalion Goes Into Action

Those of us, Soviet people, who were old enough to realise what was happening will never forget the day the war broke out—June 22, 1941. That day divided our lives in two, and we were to feel it more and more clearly as the fighting fronts and the war roads took us ever further away from it, and always in our hearts we were to lovingly cherish the image of that other, pre-war peacetime life.

Markov begins his story with the outbreak of the war, and tells what he, like all his countrymen, felt when he heard the news. "The war turned everything upside down," he writes. "It affected every man, woman and child, peeped into every little corner, gave something to do to old and young alike, and compelled everyone to live not as he wished but as the war needed him to live."

The hero of the story, Philip Yegorov, is on his way to the front (he believes, like Markov himself did, that the train is heading west, not east), he watches the lights of the town melting away behind him, and recalls the day the war began—June 22.

The background against which Philip's character is shown to us is the austere life of the Transbaikalian soldiers who in conditions of constant tension are learning, military training apart, to endure frost, heat and thirst without slackening their self-discipline or their preparedness to go into action. The personages of whom Markov gives the

by a historian or a sociologist and not an artist. It opens with the words, "In the second half of the last century Iedot Kurmin, a merchant, started a bee-garden in the depths of the taiga." The reader is then informed in the same crup manner that the merchant died and his son sold the bee-garden to Zakhar for twenty silver rubles plus lifelong toll of two cartloads of honey a year delivered to him in town. Thus, a free peasant became shackled for life by a merchant who also owned gold mines.

There were five people in Zakhar's household: Zakhar himself and his wife Agafia, Agafia's brother known as Old Fishka, and Zakhar's son Matvei with his wife Anna. The elder son, Vlas, had moved to town where he opened a store, got married and started a family.

The author called this prologue "From the Strogov Past", setting it apart from the novel itself. Though presented as a brief historico-sociological commentary, under the pen of the artist a fact becomes a feature of someone's fate, and the people whose social standing is all that is designated become living, unique characters. And even from the little that is said about these people one clearly sees the time they live in.

The commentary can be likened to a cross-section of the undersoil showing the roots of the tree that must grow, sprout leaves, spread and gain strength under the downpours and storms of its day. It must live, and that means it must change and take on new traits.

History will break up the Strogovs' old way of life, as in the case of millions of other similar families, and people will travel other, unfamiliar roads. But that is in the future. At present the historian dispassionately tells us what happened to the Strogov family, and merely defines the time and place on the map of history: "To the north of the bee-garden the taiga made a solid wall. The forests stretched for thousands of versts—unpeopled, vast and mute..."

However, for those who live there the unpeopled, mute taiga is full of life, sounds and colours. And the very first

by a historian or a sociologist and not an artist. It opens with the words: "In the second half of the last century Fedot Kuzmin, a merchant, started a bee-garden in the depths of the taiga." The reader is then informed in the same crisp manner that the merchant died and his son sold the bee-garden to Zakhar for twenty silver rubles plus lifelong toll of two cartloads of honey a year delivered to him in town. Thus, a free peasant became shackled to life by a merchant who also owned gold mines.

There were five people in Zakhar's household: Zakhar himself and his wife Agafia, Agafia's brother known as Old Fishka, and Zakhar's son Matvei with his wife Anna. The elder son, Vlas, had moved to town where he opened a store, got married and started a family.

The author called this prologue "From the Strogovs' Past", setting it apart from the novel itself. Though presented as a brief historico-sociological commentary, under the pen of the artist a fact becomes a feature of someone's fate, and the people whose social standing is all that is designated become living, unique characters. And even from the little that is said about these people one clearly sees the time they live in.

The commentary can be likened to a cross-section of the undersoil showing the roots of the tree that must grow, sprout leaves, spread and gain strength under the downpours and storms of its day. It must live, and that means it must change and take on new traits.

History will break up the Strogovs' old way of life, as in the case of millions of other similar families, and people will travel other, unfamiliar roads. But that is in the future. At present the historian dispassionately tells us what happened to the Strogov family, and merely defines the time and place on the map of history: "To the north of the bee-garden the taiga made a solid wall. The forests stretched for thousands of versts—unpeopled, vast and mute."

However, for those who live there the unpeopled, mute taiga is full of life, sounds and colours. And the very first

midst. Could it be a psychological aberration on the part of the heroes? But let us see what happens next.

"On the following day Matvei went to the bee-garden walking across the forest. He was going to take a horse there and ride to Volchyi Nory to report the happening to the authorities. No matter who the suicide was: a peasant, a hunter from far away, or a fugitive new settler without kith or kin of whom there were more and more in Siberia with every year, he was anyway a man, and it was a sin to leave him to rot like carrion."

Matvei, cast for the role of a revolutionary by history is the spokesman for "conscience" here, for those notions of good and bad, for what is human and inhuman as they were traditionally held by the Siberian peasants—the hunters and the tillers of the soil.

In the brief prologue the historian gives the social standing of the novel's heroes and the time of action, and now, in the very first episode, the artist shows what gave them their strength of character and their dominant moral qualities.

However, the peasantry was by no means a homogeneous class. The vigorous social stratification of the Siberian peasantry in the years preceding the Revolution undermined and diluted their morality which still contained elements of a patriarchal system. And other types emerged. People like the Strogova joined the revolution because the ideals it affirmed embodied the peasant masses' concepts of a just life, worthy of man.

That solitary shot fired in the taiga started a tangled chain of subsequent events.

Pribytkin, the investigator who interrogated Old Fishka and Matvei (who were accused of murder when they reported the suicide) decides to prospect for gold himself in the Yuksinsk taiga, and so does Zamovsky, the village "millionaire."

Old Fishka and Matvei declare war on these two men because they want to protect the taiga from outsiders and keep it the way it is for hunters. There is a tragic sequel of

with a description of a transitional state of nature. ~~See~~ thing comes to a conclusion, something new is born a nature, and the same thing happens in the life of people. But the correlation is far more complex than it can appear on the surface.

For the heroes of Markov's novel nature is not ~~just~~ a landscape to admire and discover how perfect harmonises with one's own mood or, contrarily, completely at odds it is with what one feels. Not the environment in which they live: it is their daily bread, their home, and their future. And at the same time a fount of poetry and beauty. The heroes' relations with nature are complex and diverse, and they are changing as the plot develops—this is a very important problem which the author studies in its social, ethical, and aesthetical aspects. Perhaps the principal trait of character in both Old Fishka and Matvei which the reader can quite clearly see is their highly sensitive attitude to nature whose might and power they perceive poetically. And when they go to war against people who want to rob the taiga for their own enrichment, they defend not just its natural riches which must belong to the whole community, but also its beauty and freedom.

Personal relationships in the novel become complicated owing to the social distinction between the different characters: once they stop sharing their interests and ambitions, a clash becomes unavoidable. Matvei is hated by the prosperous villagers Yutkin and Shtychkov, and his reciprocal feeling develops in him to an awareness of the class implacability of their attitude to him; on the other hand, his friendship with Sokolovsky, a rich boy's tutor, grows all the stronger with the years and they become comrades in struggle.

Personal and social interests become intricately intertwined, and inevitably the peasants of this taiga village also become involved in the events of the outside world. Matvei is recruited into the army, and doing his soldier's duty away from home he sees that people everywhere are

and move to Volhyni Army. Men who want to fight their rights but do not know how to go about it, surround Matvei. Little by little the psychological tension collapses and the peasants are ready to challenge the authorities and the time-honoured system. They feel the power of collective struggle for the first time when they boycott Yushman's mill. This experience will serve them later in the fight over the cedar grove, and then establishing themselves masters of their own land. Finally, the men who learnt the worth of their first collective struggle will make the backbone of the partisan army.

Time itself widens the range of the novel, linking the remote targa villages with towns and with the revolutionary movement of the working class.

In town Matvei watches a strike and is impressed by the organised struggle of the workers. Here is an expression of his own thoughts about the need for radical changes, and he realises that the masses are seething with discontent. His old friend Sokolovsky, a Bolshevik, helps Matvei to understand what is happening and explains to him that Russia is preparing to engage in warfare with Japan. The powers that be, the big industrialists and capitalists were hoping to profit by this war, while the Russian people as a whole would be nothing but cannon fodder, a pawn in the game played by Russian and foreign capitalists. Sokolovsky persuades Matvei to take on the job of prison warden where he could be of great help to the political prisoners. Thus begins Matvei's school of underground work which he is joined in by his childhood friend Anton Topilkin.

As the events unfold, we clearly feel the inner development of the plot—the maturing of the heroes' characters and the gradual shaping of their ideological convictions.

The book which begins as a story about people living in a remote targa village where the only visitors from the outside world are an occasional fugitive exile or a volost police officer, develops into an embracing historical novel. The action is shifted from the village to town, to

years of the revolution and the first success in this revolutionary struggle about which there can be no doubt. It is the mortal blow struck at the former system and fluctuations of the market. The lines of demarcation have become more distinct.

Under the hammer blow of the lessons taught by Stolypin and with undeviating and consistent agitation by the revolutionary Social Democrats not only the socialist proletariat but also the democratic masses of the peasantry will inevitably advance from their midst more and more steeled fighters.

In the novel, this process is shown in compelling, imaginative pictures. The readiness of the peasants to fight for the cedar grove, the moment's inner tension, and the chances of a tragic outcome in a situation when two forces are ready for a head-on collision is the culmination of the book.

Its peak is the arrival in Volchyn Nory of a squad of soldiers with an officer in command to guard the cedar grove. This is not the same thing as the arrival of the volost police officer in the old days who merely symbolized power. And it is no longer just a psychological problem. The peasants have to decide whether to capitulate or give the soldiers battle. The decision is not an easy one to make. A whole company might be sent in, there would be court martials, executions, and ruthless reprisals taken on the rebels. Should they give in, then? But that bodes them no good either. Matvei says to the peasants who come to him for advice. "Today it's the cedar grove, and tomorrow they'll chase us off our ploughed fields..." Matvei who has gone through the school of underground political struggle knows that retreat may cost them something else, a loss far more unretrievable—there'll be wavering, doubt in going against the authorities at all, a morale which is ruinous to struggle and which is best expressed in the saying: "You cannot chop wood."

*V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*

doubt left now in the minds of men returning home from the war that they have to fight their battles for land and freedom themselves.

Following the inner development of the plot we see that the social conflicts become also psychological conflicts the more we know about the novel's principal personages. It is this collision of characters that gives the its emotional tension and dynamics. Let us, therefore, to see the leading figures in this light.

Man and His Inner World

Anna, the daughter of Yutkin, the village "millionaire" falls in love with Matvei and, against her parents' wishes, marries him, a lad of modest means who, moreover, has neither wealth nor power.

The marriage engenders mutual dislike between the Yutkins and the Strogovs, but for the time being both families try to keep up pretences for the sake of propriety. Still, they drift farther and farther apart as time goes on. Matvei's estrangement from his father-in-law Yevdokim Yutkin grows as the social conflicts in the village come to a head, for he belongs to the "trashy poor" whom Yutkin and his like oppress ruthlessly. Events in Volchyi Nor lead to a final break between Matvei and Yutkin who at the same time becomes closer and closer with Demyan Shitychkov, a prosperous farmer whom Yutkin would have much preferred for a son-in-law, all the more so since he knows how desperately Demyan loves Anna.

After reading the manuscript of *The Strogovs* Isaac Babel commended the young writer's skill in painting the complex and psychologically authentic character of Anna. She loves Matvei passionately and sincerely, but she also feels sorry for Demyan, sympathizing with what he must be suffering from his unrequited love. The warmth she feels for Demyan is easily explained, as Yevdokim Yutkin's daughter she understands Demyan better and is closer to

evil of a free and worthy life. Revolution, she has now, is a moral act. In the novel, that is a most important aspect of revolution, developed in the whole system of characters in their relationships and interconnections, and in those moral, ethical and aesthetical values cherished by the "positive" characters, whose moral worth and estrangement of injustice create that unique atmosphere which is so typical for Markov's books.

Matvei Strogov is as important a character as Anna: a better understanding of the socio-philosophical problem raised in the novel. He knows none of Anna's writings and what is more her ambitions of a rich man's daughter are alien to him. And that has caused their want of understanding and their estrangement. Anna's inner battle is all the more painful because the opposing forces are the most dearest to her: her father and her husband. It is a terrible wrench for Anna to disown her father, but she has no choice since she is making a clean break with cruelty, deceit, heartlessness, and everything that humbles and kills man.

Revolution is invincible because it absorbs the finest qualities of the popular masses which feed it with their life-giving juices, and because it embodies and develops the ideals which became shaped in the process of their growing historical self-awareness. This thought of the author's is the summing up of the study he made of those strata of life which are presented to us in the novel in their deep social and socio-psychological cross section.

The characters of Matvei Strogov and Old Fishka provide the key to the understanding of this philosophical idea.

We see Matvei Strogov first as an angular, shy youth, then a grown man, a husband and father, we see him as a recruit, as a peasant, we see him with his childhood friends, with his comrades in struggle.

From the first he appeals to us because he has an innate sense of justice, he is responsive to the troubles of others, and is, in fact, an honourable man. He demonstrates boldness, courage and resoluteness when he helps

venify the person's inner harmony with the world.

In his novel one feels that nature is part of the people's life, it is not something to merely contemplate and adore. The forest means hunting, the open country means fields and pastures for their cattle. Nature is their life and it is also the arena of social clashes and class battles.

The peasants' daily toil, their hopes, joys and fortunes are all connected with nature, and they have their intimate knowledge and understanding of it down the generations. And that is why one other theme—nature and revolution—begins to sound so naturally here, from the first chapters of the novel. Revolution provides an opportunity to tackle such complex problems as the relationship of nature and society, nature and man, which people have always wanted to solve.

The philosophy of the historical continuity of the people's life and of revolution as the highest stage of its development is disclosed in the ideological and compositional structure of the novel. The generations of Strogovs, each of which carries on the struggle, enriching it with a new purpose in accordance with the new historical tasks, visually represent the onward march of history and the changes it brings in its wake. Through the generations of Strogovs, chosen by the author as the living embodiment of the idea of continuity, he shows us this continuity in all its multiplicity and complexity of ties as they are manifested and as they cross in all spheres of life—economic, social, public and political—and how, in the final count, they determine the passion and intensity of class battles.

At the beginning of this chain we see the figure of Old Fishka. The line of the Strogovs might be traced from Old Fishka down to Maxim and Artyom, which would be chronologically correct. But on the other hand the connection might be seen differently: Old Fishka and Matvei, Old Fishka and Anna, Old Fishka and Artyom and Maxim. And that is how the reader, one imagines, will see Old Fishka—always in the midst of the main happen-

and Old Fishka, too, must depart from this life when time comes. But even his death is symbolical: he breaks off his life in movement to record, as it were, a moment of living, not of dying. Death was farthest anybody's mind when Old Fishka came home and welcomed so lovingly by men and women, old and young alike. But why did he hurry so, hastily nodding and left in response to people greeting him? Could he have felt that he had not much longer and hurried to see his people for the last time, and say something to them before parting? Maybe so. One thing can be said for certain. Fishka hurried to share his joy with Matvei, because afterwards Matvei discovered a gold nugget weighing half a pound in his tobacco pouch. It was like Old Fishka's bequest: bravely lead the people now to prospect gold beyond the Yuksa. He had found gold for everyone for the people. He had accomplished everything he could have accomplished in his life.

The next scene begins with a description of spring lustily coming into its own—the spring of a new life when the peasants, joining forces, start sowing.

Matvei and Anna come to the end of the novel. Elderly people, the wiser for their life experience, emotionally strong and eager to build up their new world. Readers will remember the tragic death of Manya Dubovina, the sweetheart of their son Artyom. The story of Artyom and Manya's love is told movingly and Artyom's tragic loss is hard to accept.

The trials that fall to the lot of both Maxim and Artyom make them the stronger and wiser as they overcome them. Their future is theirs to shape with their own hands, but that will make the subject of another novel. The greater part of their lives is to be lived in the future, and the closing pages of *The Strogovs* lead the way into this future. Soviet power has been established. The land now belongs to those who till it, and its mineral wealth to the entire people. A gold prospecting party, organised by the Government, sets out to the Yuksa basin. Matvei Zr-

and Old Fatik, too, must depart from this life some time. But even his death is portrayed as a break-off his life in movement to succeed as a movement of life, not of dying. Death was feared by nobody's mind when Old Fatik came here & welcomed so warmly by men and women, old and young. But why did he hurry so, hastily pulling right left in response to people greeting him? Could he have felt that he had not much longer and hurried to see his people for the last time and say something to them, "parting"? Maybe so. One thing can be said for certain: Fatik hurried to share his joy with Matvei, because the words Matvei discovered a gold nugget working his pound in his tobacco pouch. It was like Old Fatik's bequest: bravely lead the people now to prospect for gold beyond the Yuksa. He had found gold for everyone for the people. He had accomplished everything he could have accomplished in his life.

The next scene begins with a description of spring lustily coming into its own: the spring of a new life when the peasants, joining forces, start sowing.

Matvei and Anna come to the end of the novel's elderly people, the wiser for their life experience, emotionally strong and eager to build up their new world. Readers will remember the tragic death of Manya Dobrovina, the sweetheart of their son Artyom. The story of Artyom and Manya's love is told movingly and Artyom's tragic loss is hard to accept.

The trials that fall to the lot of both Maxim and Artyom make them the stronger and wiser as they overcome them. Their future is theirs to shape with their own hands, but that will make the subject of another novel. The greater part of their lives is to be lived in the future and the closing pages of *The Strogovs* lead the way into this future. Soviet power has been established. The land now belongs to those who till it, and its mineral wealth to the entire people. A gold prospecting party, organized by the Government, sets out to the Yuksa basin. Matvei 22

and Old Fishka, too, must depart from this life when the time comes. But even his death is symbolical: the author breaks off his life in movement to record, as it were, the moment of living, not of dying. Death was farthest from anybody's mind when Old Fishka came home to be welcomed so lovingly by men and women, old and young alike. But why did he hurry so, hastily nodding right and left in response to people greeting him? Could he have felt that he had not much longer and hurried to see his own people for the last time, and say something to them in parting? Maybe so. One thing can be said for certain: Old Fishka hurried to share his joy with Matvei, because afterwards Matvei discovered a gold nugget weighing half a pound in his tobacco pouch. It was like Old Fishka's last bequest; bravely lead the people now to prospect for gold beyond the Yuksa. He had found gold for everyone, for the people. He had accomplished everything he could have accomplished in his life.

The next scene begins with a description of spring lustily coming into its own—the spring of a new life when the peasants, joining forces, start sowing.

Matvei and Anna come to the end of the novel as elderly people, the wiser for their life experience, emotionally strong and eager to build up their new world. Readers will remember the tragic death of Manya Dubrovina, the sweetheart of their son Artyom. The story of Artyom and Manya's love is told movingly and Artyom's tragic loss is hard to accept.

The trials that fall to the lot of both Maxim and Artyom make them the stronger and wiser as they overcome them. Their future is theirs to shape with their own hands, but that will make the subject of another novel. The greater part of their lives is to be lived in the future, and the closing pages of *The Strogovs* lead the way into this future. Soviet power has been established. The land now belongs to those who till it, and its mineral wealth to the entire people. A gold prospecting party, organised by the Government, sets out to the Yuksa basin. Matvei Za-

interrupting the usual flow of life, a year would not be very much, but in that period of a revolutionary reorganisation of life it worked an enormous change in the people's psychology. In 1921, the peasants of the village of Pesochnaya decide to set up a commune, under the guidance of their local Communists, on the Vassyugan, a river in the depths of the taiga. They want to live and work on communist principles and translate the boldest dream cherished by mankind into instant reality.

The plot is based on real happenings and facts; the author's fidelity to historical truth is as manifest here as elsewhere. But there is much more to the story than this true episode. On the one hand, the attempt of the peasants to set up a commune reflects the times in their profound historical significance, the enthusiasm for revolutionary transformations that gripped the masses, the creative spirit urging people to find better ways of organising life, and, on the other—the dramatic conflict between the new and the tenacious old.

The story embraces a period of about ten years, that decisive decade of the workers' and peasants' dedicated, heroic effort that transformed the country, bled white by economic dislocation, civil war and foreign intervention, into an industrial power.

Father and Son is perhaps the most autobiographical of Georgi Markov's books. His father was the chairman of that "Friendship" commune set up on the Vassyugan river in 1921. There is much that is personal in the relationship between Alyosha and his father Roman Bastrykov in the novel. Markov's own father was the prototype of Roman Bastrykov, a staunch Communist, a man of remarkable integrity and virtue. The murder of Panka Skobeyeva, the sister of Markov's boyhood friend (he gave her a different name in the novel) really took place. In the book there are no few other facts which have a connection with the author's life. It was a great temptation, of course, to write of what involved him personally, but the novel he set out to write called for historical material of far greater

interrupting the usual flow of life, a year would not be very much, but in that period of a revolutionary reorganisation of life it worked an enormous change in the people's psychology. In 1921, the peasants of the village of Pechenaya decide to set up a commune, under the guidance of their local Communists, on the Vassyugan, a river in the depths of the tundra. They want to live and work on communist principles and translate the boldest dream cherished by mankind into instant reality.

The plot is based on real happenings and facts; the author's fidelity to historical truth is as manifest here as elsewhere. But there is much more to the story than the true episode. On the one hand, the attempt of the peasant to set up a commune reflects the times in their profound historical significance, the enthusiasm for revolutionary transformations that gripped the masses, the creative spirit urging people to find better ways of organising life, and on the other—the dramatic conflict between the new and the tenacious old.

The story embraces a period of about ten years, the decisive decade of the workers' and peasants' dedicated heroic effort that transformed the country, bled white by economic dislocation, civil war and foreign intervention into an industrial power.

Father and Son is perhaps the most autobiographical of Georgi Markov's books. His father was the chairman of that "Friendship" commune set up on the Vassyugan river in 1921. There is much that is personal in the relationship between Alyosha and his father Roman Bastrykov in the novel. Markov's own father was the prototype of Roman Bastrykov, a staunch Communist, a man of remarkable integrity and virtue. The murder of Panka Skobeyeva, the sister of Markov's boyhood friend (he gave her a different name in the novel) really took place. In the book there are no few other facts which have a connection with the author's life. It was a great temptation, of course, to write of what involved him personally, but the novel he set out to write called for historical material of far greater

interrupting the usual flow of life, a year would not be very much, but in that period of a revolutionary reorganisation of life it worked an enormous change in the people's psychology. In 1921, the peasants of the village of Pesochnaya decide to set up a commune, under the guidance of their local Communists, on the Vassyugan, a river in the depths of the taiga. They want to live and work on communist principles and translate the boldest dream cherished by mankind into instant reality.

The plot is based on real happenings and facts; the author's fidelity to historical truth is as manifest here as elsewhere. But there is much more to the story than this true episode. On the one hand, the attempt of the peasant to set up a commune reflects the times in their profound historical significance, the enthusiasm for revolutionary transformations that gripped the masses, the creative spirit urging people to find better ways of organising life, and on the other—the dramatic conflict between the new and the tenacious old.

The story embraces a period of about ten years, the decisive decade of the workers' and peasants' dedicated heroic effort that transformed the country, bled white by economic dislocation, civil war and foreign intervention into an industrial power.

Father and Son is perhaps the most autobiographical of Georgi Markov's books. His father was the chairman of that "Friendship" commune set up on the Vassyugan river in 1921. There is much that is personal in the relationship between Alyosha and his father Roman Bastykov in the novel. Markov's own father was the prototype of Roman Bastykov, a staunch Communist, a man of remarkable integrity and virtue. The murder of Panka Skobeyeva, the sister of Markov's boyhood friend (he gave her a different name in the novel) really took place. In the book there are no few other facts which have a connection with the author's life. It was a great temptation, of course, to write of what involved him personally, but the novel he set out to write called for historical material of far greater

ly, is motivated by bitter hatred against the revolution and a desperate desire to keep his power and his stolen wealth at any price. He hides the Whiteguard officers in his lodge, and with their assistance kills the leaders of the commune.

As always with Markov, the social, class conflict unfolds in its moral and psychological aspects.

Issayev's hunting lodge and the new settlement are two different worlds, an old and a new one, each living according to its own laws, and coming to grips in a furious battle to the death.

This battle represents, in miniature, the complex acute and dramatic conflict of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary ideals and ambitions. The tension mounts and the unhurried rhythm of the opening scenes grows gradually faster, gathering the momentum of a thunderbolt. The expectation of an unavoidable explosion is enhanced by the contrast of the alternating chapters—one about the commune, one about the conspirators, in the former one feels growing moral strength, and in the latter—the fear of losing everything—power, above all else—and the opening of the monstrous plot to kill the commune leaders.

When the peasants were only just beginning to settle in, an old hunter, a Khanti, came to tell them of the tribe's plight. Roman Bastrykov said to him: "So you've come to seek help from the commune, have you, old friend? Very good, go and tell the others that we shall help you, though we have not much ourselves. We shall give you flour and other supplies. Our faith says: if you have a chunk of bread, break off a piece and give it to your friend."

And Mityai, another member of the commune, adds proudly: "That's right, brother, we believe in brotherhood and equality, everything that's mine is yours, and what's yours is mine."

And that is not a mere declaration, it is a profound conviction which the members of the commune act upon. With sympathy and deep-felt understanding of the psychology of peasants who had through the ages been oppressed by need, Georgi Markov portrays the commu-

sents as his granddaughter, gradually turns against him and finally becomes his wrathful accuser. Such is the logic of life, of history, that the young people who reached adulthood in the first years of Soviet power should choose the road illumined by revolutionary ideals. With psychological veracity the author traces the evolution of Nadyushka's self-awareness and the development of her personality. At first, she meekly endures all the hardships of her life because she cannot picture any other, for Issayev has built a solid wall around his own small world, and only deep down in the girl's heart a bitterness begins to accumulate from the evil which she witnesses. But her very first encounter with the commune leaders who come to see Issayev awakens in her some new, as yet vague feeling. She is drawn to these people with her sensitive child heart without knowing them but already instinctively trusting in their kindness, moral strength and sincerity. And, naturally enough, it is Alyosha Bastrykov, a boy her own age, who gives Nadyushka her first, and probably her most important lesson in her political education. The outward simplicity with which this scene is written speaks of the author's intimate knowledge of the psychology of youngsters. A new phase begins in Nadyushka's life after this lesson. What Alyosha has told her about the communards' intrepidity in their struggle against injustice evokes a warm response from her, it answers her own vague longings, and now she sees Issayev, his treatment of her, and the life she has been living in a new light. She longs to escape from Issayev's world, and her every new encounter with the communards strengthens this resolve.

Life-size portraits are given of the Whiteguard officers who have been hiding out in Issayev's hunting lodge since the rout of General Pepelyayev's detachment. They are: Captain Otts—a Baltic baron, Lt. Kibalnikov, and Second Lt. Vedernikov. It is they who, acting on Issayev's instigation, murder the leaders of the commune. At the beginning of the novel we find them still hopeful that the tide might turn, that not all has been lost. Compelled to lie low and

soil, so to speak. The rhythm of the narrative grows faster and faster, and the plot develops at a greater and greater pace. Issayev's accomplices, the Whiteguard officers, shoot the commune leaders. Lukeria's life ends tragically, however, herself dies, shot by Skobeyev. The conflict that gave the motive power to the plot seems to be over.

But if the novel were to end on that it would have been a different book with a different scope and a different message. In his further evolution of the plot the author discovers new and more promising possibilities of showing the changing life and the movement of time. There would be no more to the story with the leading figures dead, but new personalities came to replace the fallen heroes and the plot found "second wind." In the formula "crime and punishment" time shifts the accent to "punishment." In the second part of the novel the problem of crime and punishment is resolved as the complete debacle, social, ideological and moral, of the counter-revolutionary force. Such is the historical retribution accomplished by the new generation.

The Lyrical and the Epical

What does one feel when one sees a thin, green shoot that has broken its way through rock straining upwards into the sunlight? This is perhaps an overused simile when applied to the vital force of life in general, but what is important to us here is the feeling this image arouses, and it is to this feeling that the author appeals when he unfolds before the reader the picture of Alyosha Bastykov's miserable boyhood after the death of his father. He wants the reader to go with the boy through all the trials and tribulations that fall to his lot and to love him for coming through these trials unembittered and unaffected in his essential goodness.

At first, Alyosha is taken in by kind people, Ivan Soldat and his wife Arina, but Ivan dies, and the boy is left

friends and enemies, laying bare before them all her innermost thoughts and feelings. Her voice rises to the heights of pathos then drops to a soft, intimate tone. It throbs with passion, and again flows calmly and forth. She is truthful in her confession, in her characterization of the people she has come across in her life, and in describing the events leading up to her tragic death. Her strongest expresses with psychological accurateness the thoughts and feelings of her fellow Komsomol members, and her writing is as characteristically energetic as theirs, is emotionalistic and accentuated with slogans.

Panka Skobeyeva's short life becomes a feat in the name of Revolution like the feats performed by the fighters of the older generation. Once again we feel the high-tension current running from "fathers" to "sons" and charging them with that strength of conviction, the dedication and courage which are the making of heroes. One cannot help feeling stirred when reading this chapter probably because the author could not and did not want to restrain his own emotions when he was writing it—his pride, his admiration, and his pain.

As regards the author's style, its distinguishing feature is an original combination of epic breadth in the representation of events with lyrical image-painting.

In the second part of the novel prominence is given to Tikhon Skobeyev, a workman and a veteran Bolshevik. It is he who is to play the decisive role in the life of Alyosha Bastrykov and Nadyusha Issayeva, and to live through the tragic death of his daughter Panka. He is one of those men who may be called the conscience of the revolution. His very presence engenders an atmosphere of simple, sincere relations, and everything he does is right and necessary. Naturally converging upon him are the various lines of the plot which in this second part of the book develops into a struggle between the "sons" and the remnants of the counter-revolution. It is thanks to Tikhon Skobeyev's support and assistance that Alyosha and Nadyusha unmask Vedernikov. It is to Tikhon Skobeyev

iron and steel works and the engineering centers of the country, the land under cultivation. A unique part of Russia had been devastated and a vast number of people were left without their heads. In these conditions, the United States were to play a special role in rehabilitating the country. It was there that the country's power base was to be built up; it was there that trains loaded with wheat, grain, building materials, and machinery for the tremendous effort the demands of the Communists were fulfilled.

It seemed that what was being done in Siberia satisfied only the urgent, current needs of the country; that science and industry had to engage wholly in the solution of these urgent problems. However, it was everyone that this seemed so, there were many engineers and Party workers who realized what resources were still untapped in Siberia. But to exploit its mineral wealth and its power resources and to do some research work had to be done first, and that cost money and manpower. How could the country afford to invest money in research when every ruble was needed to put the devastated towns back on their feet?

The author clearly sensed the inevitability of this opinion on whether to work for the present day's present needs, or find reserve strength and work with an eye to the future? But where find this reserve strength? It itself suggested the answer; in encouraging the initiative of the masses and in trusting people who knew their country thoroughly and who were capable of thinking in terms of the state as a whole. New methods of work had to be introduced. In the meantime, the Communist Party was gathering strength for a bold leap forward. Almost 15 years later Georgi Markov would still remember the impression made upon him by the first conference held in Irkutsk in August 1947 on Eastern Siberia's productive forces.

The problems and conflicts which the writer observed

thing would follow its usual course like the year like ten or a hundred years before. "Only people not settle for a simple repetition of what went. And this spring was unlike any they had known before. The theme of coming changes is thus introduced very beginning.

At first, there may seem to be nothing new in the conflict between the post graduate student Alexei Kim and his teacher Professor Velikanov. This has happened in science before: a theory once advanced comes generally accepted and its author gradually begins to take its infallibility for granted. He regards any attempt to refute his theory as nothing short of sacrilege, and in this present case the destructor is his favourite pupil (cause he is talented) who, instead of developing his theory further is refuting it. Thus, the conflict of scientific ideas becomes also an ethical one.

Although such things have happened before, there is a new twist to the conflict in this book. We are not told once that Krayukhin's "mutiny" is not simply an attempt to impudently overthrow an established theory which seems erroneous to him. The point at issue is whether there is any mineral wealth in Uluyulye or not. In his day Professor Velikanov had trekked all over Uluyulye, and on what grounds dared his pupil refute his theory? But Krayukhin's counter-theory is based on more than just his own and as yet very sparse observations and surveys. What he is in possession of is a map of Uluyulye on which his father had roughly marked the places of prospective deposits. Strictly speaking, the map has no scientific value. The crosses on it were made by a hunter, commander of a partisan detachment. But Krayukhin knows what the experience of hunters and pathfinders means, he knows that they faithfully follow the Siberians' great tradition of exploring their land: the information gathered was handed down the generations by word of mouth, the stories told grew into legends and as legends they were remembered and passed on.

the springs, submits her report to the health authorities, demanding that a survey party should be sent to the place once. The reprimand she receives for going off on leave of absence does not daunt her. Maria Stepanovna, unexpectedly for Professor Vellios, speaks out most resolutely for a more complete exploration of Uluzulye, in effect supporting the point of view of Krayukhin.

It appears that others besides Krayukhin also have the courage to defend their point of view. It appears that the obstinate, "difficult" young scholar is not such a Don Quixote after all. The novel takes us little by little into an atmosphere of creative seeking and acquaints us with an active social stand maintained by many different people who, for all the difference of position, temperament and experience, are united by their sense of responsibility to the true masters of their country who work for the good of the state as a whole and have the boldness to fight to their convictions.

The writer was aware of the new development, peculiar for the time and soon to prevail throughout the country and this was the creative initiative of workers on the spot which, organised and directed by the Party, grew into a great constructive force. However, some time had to pass for this new development to mature and prove its worth in the struggle against the old.

In the novel, the conflict from the first has a social character although it takes place in the scientific industry sphere. The moral and psychological aspect of the conflict is disclosed in the clash of the personages' views and convictions.

The confrontation between people with a creative mind, initiative, and foresight and those who are shackled by ossified dogmas, who dread everything new, and are satisfied with tackling only urgent problems, develops in the novel as a social, moral and psychological conflict embracing such issues as style of management, as trust and respect for the individual, for views and ideas that

Maxim who has the backing of a whole world.
In the very centre of events we see Maxim Strogov is in charge of the industrial department of the Party committee. Later, he is promoted to first of the regional Party committee and when he receives his appointment, he arrives in Vorkuta. He does not hasten to dispense orders and instructions of a left, but first goes on a tour of the region, travels to the remotest corners to see the local situation for himself, speak with people, try to identify with their joys and difficulties, and find ways to overcome them. He does not immediately arrive at the conclusion that Koryol is right, but he believes the local men who had tried to the length and breadth of the taiga and who, like his father, had fought for the establishment of Soviet power. Maxim Strogov is all for a scientific verification of this for launching the exploitation of this land mineral wealth in a big way. Cleverly and tactfully he tries to turn Professor Velikanov in the new facts, to turn the strength of the research institute to the needs and requirements of this part of Siberia and to start it working on a long-term programme.

The chain—Krayukhin, Lusitun, Dobroletov and Professor Velikanov—is locked, as it were, through Maxim Strogov. And it is on him that all the episodes connected with the novel's central conflict converge.

The Communist Party guides and organises the creative genius of the people aroused to action by the revolution. The Revolution is the time when the people's fondest dreams come true. The author never forgets that the struggle for its ideals has been handed down the generations. *The Sons of the Earth* is a direct sequel to *The Strogovs* not so much because we meet the same people decades later, but mainly because their stories unfolding in new conditions and at a new stage of the revolution are an artistic embodiment of the philosophical idea of the continuity of the revolution, enriched with the people's experience. In a cross-section of life, lasting only a few short

At the research institute it is a "academic" stand maintained by and Krayukhin's belief based on data provided by indigenous taiga population. Shown here is the necessity and logic of creating an alliance between native experience, and science and actual life.

A characterisation of Uluyulye provided by the professorship is discussed by the institute's academic. The paper denies the possible presence of iron coal deposits in this region, and makes no recommendations about utilising the local forests. The tone of the report throughout is strictly "academic" and in its objective approach it completely ignores the demands of reality and draws no useful conclusions.

At the plenary session of the regional Party committee this conflict acquires other dimensions, it touches the sum total of urgent problems and has a stronger political undercurrent. Speaking at this meeting, called to discuss the region's current economic problems, Maxim Strogov compels everyone to see them in a different, more far-reaching light. In the picture he paints there become a major industrial region, and that necessitates a thorough investigation of its natural fuel and power resources. His speech, however, is not an attempt to lay out the general, purely practical line of the work as a discussion, but even so we feel that it is the same conflict only on a larger scale. They must either look far ahead and find unexplored reserves for launching new projects all the time encouraging the initiative of the masses in backing, or they must devote themselves wholly to pressing everyday problems and to the fulfillment and overfulfillment of current plans.

Maxim Strogov does not find the support he expects from Yefremov, the first secretary. As he walks home from the meeting together with Artyom, he goes over Yefremov's speech in his mind and asks himself: is he losing touch with reality, or is Yefremov unable to realise

At the research institute it is a collision between the "academic" stand maintained by the head of the institute and Krazyukhin's belief based on data provided by the indigenous taiga population. Shown here is the complexity and logic of creating an alliance between science and native experience, and more ambitiously—a closer connection between science and actual life.

A characterisation of Uluyulye provided by the professorship is discussed by the institute's academic council. The paper denies the possible presence of iron ore and coal deposits in this region, and makes no recommendations about utilising the local forests. The tone of the report throughout is strictly "academic" and in its purely objective approach it completely ignores the demands of reality and draws no useful conclusions.

At the plenary session of the regional Party committee, this conflict acquires other dimensions, it touches upon the sum total of urgent problems and has a stronger sociopolitical undercurrent. Speaking at this meeting, convened to discuss the region's current economic problems, Maxim Strogov compels everyone to see them in a different, more far-reaching light. In the picture he paints this is to become a major industrial region, and that necessitates a thorough investigation of its natural fuel and power resources. His speech, however, is not an attempt to alter the general, purely practical line of the work under discussion, but even so we feel that it is the same conflict, only on a larger scale. They must either look far ahead and find unexplored reserves for launching new projects, all the time encouraging the initiative of the masses for backing, or they must devote themselves wholly to pressing every day problems and to the fulfillment and overfulfillment of current plans.

Maxim Strogov does not find the support he expects from Yefremov, the first secretary. As he walks home from the meeting together with Artyom, he goes over Yefremov's speech in his mind and asks himself: is he losing touch with reality, or is Yefremov unable to realise

process, the different characters assert themselves, and each goes through his own *inner* development. Linked by the plot are Alexei Krayukhin, Ulenka Lutsuna, Maxim Strogov, Marina Strogova, and Professor Velikanov. When the conflict is resolved by life itself in favour of the progressive tendency, their goal in the novel is attained.

And so, in the compositional structure of the novel we can clearly distinguish two lines of plot development which cross over, as it were, in the culmination.

One line shows the inner, "undercover" change in public opinion which becomes more and more evident in the following sequence of happenings: Krayukhin's "mutiny", Lasitsin's argument with the representatives of the timber trust, Anastasia Strogova's unapproved trip to the taiga, Marina Strogova's speech at the academic council of the research institute, and Professor Velikanov's reconsideration of his former attitude to the exploration of Uluyulye. The second line, which continues the existing style of management, finds expression in such "administrative" actions as Krayukhin's dismissal from the institute, his expulsion from the Party, and finally in the agenda of the regional Party committee which was discussed at that first evening. The novel ends with a telegram from Moscow.

It is in the involved composition and the way in which the characters of the different

... Affirmation of
ships, and
as Krayuk-
from the
of
is that
tel-

process, the different characters assert themselves, and each goes through his own inner development. Linked to the plot are Alexei Krayukhin, Ulenka Lisitsina, Maxim Strogov, Marina Strogova, and Professor Velikanov. When the conflict is resolved by life itself in favour of the progressive tendency, their goal in the novel is attained.

And so, in the compositional structure of the novel we can clearly distinguish two lines of plot development which cross over, as it were, in the culmination.

One line shows the inner, "undercover" change in public opinion which becomes more and more evident in the following sequence of happenings: Krayukhin's "mutiny", Lisitsin's argument with the representatives of the timber trust, Anastasia Strogova's unapproved trip to the taiga, Marina Strogova's speech at the academic council of the research institute, and Professor Velikanov's reconsideration of his former attitude to the exploitation of Uluyulye. The second line is an affirmation of the existing style of management and relationships, and finds expression in such "administrative" acts as Krayukhin's dismissal from the institute, his expulsion from the Party, and finally in the agenda of the plenary session of the regional Party committee and the discussions that ensued that first evening, before the arrival of the telegramme from Moscow.

It is in the involved interaction of these two lines, on which the composition and the plot of the novel are based, that the characters of the different personages unfold.

To be sure, people change life, but then life also changes people.

What changes has life worked in the inner world of the novel's principal characters? What are their moral losses or gains?

The New Hero: Personality and Society

Directly or indirectly, all the people in the novel are drawn into the central conflict. Through the intertwine-

tude is unacceptable. He affirms man as an active hero-fighter, a personality linked with reality, with society, in thought and deed. It is, therefore, natural that in *The Salt of the Earth* the conflict exposed in its social and psychological aspects should lead to dramatic collisions precisely where a contradiction arises between private and public feeling.

This is best illustrated by the story of Marina Strogova's relationship with her husband Gregory Benediktin.

Marina belongs to the most memorable female characters created by Markov who has a gift for fathoming a woman's soul and skilfully disclosing the complex working of her innermost feelings. The portrayal of Marina might well be compared to that of Anna Strogova, one of Markov's most penetrating psychological studies. Like Anna, Marina is a charming woman, and again like Anna she is prone to "moral maximalism"; both cannot tolerate untruth or any kind of falsity, and both are completely sincere in the feelings they manifest. "all that, how different they are! And mainly because belong to different generations. Anna grew up in a re- taiga village, and here Marina is an intellectual, confidently and bravely defending her convictions could have hardly happened in any other times, ditions of life in the USSR were transformed so- in less than thirty years that this became qui- Anna felt her personal success, which she hard way, to be the supreme justice of the whereas to Marina this justice was as natural- breathed. The Revolution made the F- attainable to her, it gave her the chance to personality, and also the breadth of vision understanding which engender a sense of- ment and responsibility for the prese- one's countrymen and one's country. Two destinies

The problem of the personal and light of the author's affirmation of

to be characterized in a different manner: religious and worldly, accepting his essential truth. Benediktin's morality is simple and transparent enough. He has no inner battles to fight, no doubts, no scruples, unlike the other personages. His wife Marina is the first place for disenchancement with her husband in an emotional crisis. Her inner struggle mounts to the highest tension as she tries to find the true answer to the question tormenting her: "what kind of man is her husband?" She gets over her blindness and her delusions. Born of her love for Benediktin. Realization is painful, but now that she can see her husband for what he really is, she must take the decisive step she has reached upon, no matter how her heart may ache.

Benediktin is quite another matter. Like a chess player he works out all the moves in the game in advance. He is cool and calculating. The immorality of his actions does not worry him in the least. And if we bear in mind that he is a clever and cunning player with an excellent knowledge of his opponents' psychology, we shall see that he might easily pull the wool over people's eyes.

The thing is that the author wanted to embody in Benediktin the features common to an unprincipled careerist and also to show what makes a person like him tick. In the first place it is his brazen conceit, his firm conviction that no one will dare to doubt the uncertainty of his far-sounding phrases which he spouts as a cover for his true intentions and aims.

Significantly, the unmasking of Benediktin is connected with the settlement of the main conflict in the novel. The logic of this is self-evident: the more fully and widely will the public atmosphere support creative effort, the harder it will be on the Benediktins of this world, the sooner will they reveal their true essence.

The problem of Alexei Krayukhin's relationship with Ulenka is handled in a different, happier key. These two are the author's best loved characters. Each is endowed with features which fully answer Markov's concept of:

All he knows is that Ulenka becomes ever dearer to him he has her constantly on his mind, and his thoughts about her are not what they were before.

Georgi Markov proves himself to be a psychologist of great subtlety in revealing the slow process of flowering mutual love. He shows us what goes on in Alexei's heart and also the emotional tension of first love which is the pulse of Ulenka's life. The artist's palette here has a generous variety of colours and shades and he paints all the nuances of this first love with the softest of brush strokes.

The secret of Alexei and Ulenka's appeal lies in their integrity. And significantly, the author shows them to us when they are so young and falling so deeply in love, at a moment of emotional exultation when a person's inner beauty is most fully disclosed. And at the crucial moment in those dramatic circumstances necessitating a moral choice, we feel this beauty compellingly.

There is a certain symbolism in the scene where Alexei discovers the deposits of iron ore; their cause and their love merge into one.

The instinct of a true artist prompted Markov to conclude a chapter in the life of Alexei and Ulenka with that scene in the tundra. Yes, we are leaving them here. Their love will have to pass through many more trials. It will change and take on a new meaning and other features, there will be both the rough and the smooth, but that is a theme for another book.

The novel *The Salt of the Earth* is profoundly optimistic not only in the victory of those forces which represent the triumph of Soviet society, but also because of the creative genius of man, in the creative genius of

Will Georgi Markov has represented the trends of its development among the modern scene. vividly, the Comm art

scope and scale, of course, because he has before him authentic experience of the past thirty years and he sees how his hero has come through life's and war's stiffest tests. But on the other hand, there is a big danger in looking back from the vantage point of now. After all, the hero must remain a man of the 40's and 50's, 60's or 70's. He must think and feel as people did then, and must naturally have only the experience of his generation, otherwise the author is going against the truth of life, the truth of history.

And so, in this particular instance, the present not the past. Only verifies, not alters. And the present is a fairly power before the writer its own, contemporary problems which are dictated by social necessity. That is not a spontaneous necessity, on the contrary, it grows gradually in the minds of people. The farther the experience receded into the past, the clearer stood out the magnitude of the achievement, and the bigger across the people who had borne the war on their shoulders and won it. What was the source of their courage, staunch fortitude, and their humaneness which was not lost or rubbed out by the war but was, if anything, enriched?

To explore the inner world of the generation who had gone through the war thus became a vital need, and was in books about the Great Patriotic War, written in the 60's and 70's, that Soviet literature attained the peak achievement. Suffice it to name Vassil Bykov's stories (*Sotnikov* in the first place); Yuri Bondarev's *The Shore*, and Konstantin Simonov's *The Living and the Dead*.

This vital need, shared by all Soviet writers, inspired Georgi Markov to conceive the story we are reviewing. Here is the plot in brief. Colonel Mikhail Nesterov, who has been seriously wounded at the front and has barely recovered, comes to Pnrechensk, a small provincial town to carry out the bequest of his friend Stepan Kolbas killed in battle. Actually, he has come to stay in Pnrechensk for good, because carrying out his friend

2. He will collect all the publications of the war and will keep the publication of everything that is of some importance and the serious part of history and natural history and will publish them by night out of one's pocket.

What did he mean by this?

1. What he means is that he is the proprietor of the book and a very old father to himself.
2. Should Lydia feel as lost with a man as only that he put no obstacles to her and that the matter with understanding and responsibility and a sense of an older brother.
3. He will spare no effort nor time to go to the bottom of everything concerning history, its explanation and bring the results of his work to a possible conclusion.

Each takes on two principles before to help and support the nation and to bring in their's lives to a possible conclusion.

When Lydia hears this she read out to her by her now she is deeply impressed and ashamed of herself for laughing at its high-sounding life.

"And so you came," Lydia was going to say, "to be with me," but stopped in mid-sentence and tried to find more cautious words.

"Yes," he said, "I came to Pritchinsk to stand by you and to carry out everything I promised Stepan."

Lydia looked into Nesterov's eyes. They were truthful. Neither in his calm, low yet firm voice, nor in his kind brown eyes could she detect even a hint of mockery. She wanted to grasp his hand with the pink spots left by his healed burns, and press her lips to it.

Nesterov, however, felt it his duty to clarify: "I want you to know, Lydia, that I'm not going to demand anything of you in return. It's joy enough to be able to dedicate myself to what my friend has charged me with. Fearing that this was too high-sounding, he hastened to add: 'The war has robbed Stepan of life, and me of faith.'

Nesterov does not. He, if anyone, sincerely wishes her happiness

The author has no more to say about Lydia, he has portrayed her fully enough in the space he has given himself in this story, and we, too, hope she finds her happiness

As for Nesterov, we still have much to learn about him. His life is yet to change its course, and fate will generously reward him for all that he has done for others.

Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow

As soon as Nesterov had settled in his new home, with Lydia's permission he brought over the two boxes containing Stepan's papers, and started sorting them out

The author describes how Nesterov "got his teeth" into the material little by little, what difficulties were store for him, and what discoveries awaited him as reward for his painstaking toil. Markov himself once spent endless hours in the archives deciphering the notes made on long-ago expeditions, and his experience is clearly felt in his detailed account of the work

For the novelist, the process, fascinating in itself, of studying material pertaining to expeditions all trace of which seems to have been obliterated by time, also promises a discovery of those mostly unknown heroes who had dedicated themselves to the difficult and noble cause of exploring their country's natural resources.

Nesterov becomes a link in the long chain of events relating to Tulchevsky's expedition. In 1913, Tulchevsky's party arrived in the Priurechensk taiga and its whereabouts were known to Popov, a hunter from Savkin's homestead deep in the taiga. Ivan Perevalov, headmaster of the Pikhovka village school, heard about it from the local people and in 1940 passed on the information to Stepan Koltsov. Thirty four years later, Nesterov swears to find the place where Tulchevsky had discovered gold, mercury and possibly other minerals.

It is worthy of note that none of the people who had

of love, who had known all the trials of indignity, and Mikhail Nesterov, a man of honest proud heart who had fought at the front for his friend, suffered betrayal in love, and so on. . . .
any surprise gifts from fate

Two people who had a lifetime behind a lifetime ahead Two personalities

They are drawn together irresistibly to unfolds against the background of nature and is attuned to it. The author needed the colors of nature, its light, its living breath, its everlasting beauty to show the night and born an love at its most sublime. It was the first *Streptococcus* and in *The Salt of the Earth* the best revealed when he merges with and is absorbed in which, besides disclosing its beauty to him in relation, divulges its secrets to him.

Nesterov and Yevdokim set off together into following the trail of Tulchensky's expedition, a tune smiles on them. It is these few days in the decade their future. With psychological accuracy author traces their phases of feeling: mutual understanding, awakening love, anxiously sounding daring to admit it even to themselves, and then overwhelming, overpowering love

The picture of the times unrolled by the author have been considerably poorer without these two people meeting, because so much has led up to it. Their world, enriched by what they have experienced, is called in all its beauty in their love.

And so, the story of the soldier back from the front concluded. In carrying out his moral obligation to his place in life, happiness, and a sense of participation in his country's peacetime projects.

The story ends with Nesterov's letter to Lyda by an epilogue. In this letter he tells her his own daughter has been born to him and Yevdokim ("the son of her mother—black hair, big eyes, loud voice, etc.

Only someone completely in love with his land could have written this.

Every time Georgi Markov goes back to Siberia, his thoughts and feelings are excited anew. What he has accomplished astounds him, and the very air there is vibrant with coming achievements.

It is when his thoughts turn to history, when of the past rise before his mind's eye, that he feels urgently in need of plunging into the atmosphere of great changes that are taking place in Siberia, to feel what the future will be like.

Throughout the winter of 1969 Markov wrote his novel *Siberia*. The first part was finished, he had already visualised the road with its sharp turns, along which his heroes were yet to travel.

The range of his civic and public activities was wide. There were meetings with readers, sessions of the Writers' Union, appearances on the Union's press organs. All his life, his time was divided between public work, rummaging in archives and libraries, working with people and nature. At the Twenty-Fifth Congress of the CPSU in 1971, Markov was elected to the Central Committee, and at the Fifth Writers' Congress—first secretary of the Soviet Writers' Union. That same year, 1971, the first part of the novel was brought out by *Molodaya Gvardia* (Book 1 and Book 2) *Siberia*. In 1976 Georgi Markov was awarded the Lenin Prize. At the Twenty-Fifth Congress Markov was again elected a member of the CPSU Central Committee.

The plot of the novel with such a long history, many years to shape, it was a reflection on the creative power of the novel, what it had accomplished in Siberia, what it had been making since he first began writing in this tremendous period in the people's history.

We began this chapter with a

preceding works as well, but in this new novel the focus is on the creative spirit of the revolution. Naturally enough this idea in its philosophical interpretation called for loftier generalisations. Logic also demanded that the author should begin his narrative with the period when the revolution was approaching and the Bolshevik Party, working underground, was assembling and organising the people's revolutionary forces. Markov had already investigated this period in Siberia's revolutionary history in *The Strogovs* but the new book called for different broader generalisations and, consequently, different principles of composition and plot, as well as other artistic means of expression.

New ways of selecting and organising the material had to be found. And Markov builds the plot of *Siberia* on a link-up of events reflecting the most typical features of the time. He finds them refracted in people's actions, ambitions and destinies. Now he shows his main heroes not in the process of "ripening" revolutionary self-awareness (as in *The Strogovs*) but in the manifestation of a revolutionary's fully-shaped, characteristic traits. Correspondingly, the other personages in the novel are shown in their own typical socio-psychological manifestation. Whereas Matvei Strogov became a mature Bolshevik-revolutionary and an active organiser of Soviet power only towards the end of *The Strogovs*, the main heroes of *Siberia*, Ivan Akimov and Katya Ksenofontova, first appear as already fully fledged revolutionary fighters, Bolshevik underground workers. In *The Strogovs* Markov traces the development of a revolutionary self-awareness in the Siberian peasantry stage by stage and so begins the story from the end of the last century. In *Siberia* he tries to disclose the social and socio-political content of the revolution itself as it was explained to the masses by the Bolsheviks. Need it be said that *understanding* of the revolution, albeit gradual and slow, was also shown in *The Strogovs*, and we find that the two novels examine the same developing phenomenon from different aspects.

In this context it is clear why the action in the new

Only someone completely in love with his land could have written this

Every time Georgi Markov goes back to Siberia his thoughts and feelings are excited anew. What has been accomplished astounds him, and the very air he breathes there is vibrant with coming achievements.

It is when his thoughts turn to history, when pictures of the past rise before his mind's eye, that he feels most urgently in need of plunging into the atmosphere of the great changes that are taking place in Siberia and imagining what the future will be like

Throughout the winter of 1969 Markov worked on his novel *Siberia*. The first part was finished, and he could already visualise the road with its sharp ups and downs along which his heroes were yet to travel

The range of his civic and public activities widened: there were meetings with readers, conferences, trips, sessions of the Writers' Union secretariat, and work in the Union's press organs. All his life, since early youth, his time was divided between public activities, writing, rummaging in archives and libraries, travelling, associating with people and nature. At the Twenty-Fourth Congress of the CPSU in 1971, Markov was elected a member of its Central Committee, and at the Fifth Congress of Soviet Writers—first secretary of the Soviet Writers' Union board. That same year, 1971, the first part of his *Siberia* was brought out by Molodaya Gvardia Publishers. In full (Book 1 and Book 2) *Siberia* came out in 1974, and in 1976 Georgi Markov was awarded the Lenin Prize for it. At the Twenty-Fifth Congress of the CPSU in 1976, Markov was again elected a member of its Central Committee

The plot of the novel with such a significant title took many years to shape, it was a summing up of the author's reflections on the creative power of the Revolution and what it had accomplished in Siberia, and of the study he had been making since he first began writing of this tremendous period in the people's revolutionary history

We began this chapter with a quotation from Markov's

Two images of 1916 Russia thus emerge—this policeman and a “most important political criminal” as yet unseen but an obviously powerful person, seeing that he has the authorities, the policeman, the guards, and a whole crowd of armed men hunting him.

The different lines of the plot are tied into a tight knot from the very first pages. none other but Polya happens upon the fugitive, an underground Bolshevik Ivan Akimov Polya is the bride of Nikifor Krivorukov, whose father is one of the “mainstays of tsarism”. But Polya is also the daughter of her father who is a member of the Naryn underground Bolshevik committee. She knows what sort of people are hunted by the authorities, and hides the fugitive Ivan Akimov, a young scientist, a Bolshevik, will have to keep in hiding in the targa for many long months, and in that time he will come to understand Siberia and Siberians, he will come to appreciate its nature and its immense riches.

The image of Akimov and his line in the plot are directly tied up with the main theme of the novel, for it is Akimov who must make his way to Stockholm where his teacher, Professor Likhachev, a prominent scientific explorer and judge of Siberia's mineral deposits, has emigrated. Akimov has to help Likhachev to keep safe his materials and manuscripts for the coming revolution.

The image of Professor Likhachev is most noteworthy. His views and world outlook are typical for that part of the democratic, radically-minded intelligentsia which realised that the autocracy was doomed historically but saw no way of fighting for its overthrow and did not believe in the victory of the revolution. Likhachev tried to take a “academic” stand, that is, to serve his country and his people in the field of science and not get involved in politics. Official science in autocratic Russia, however, would not tolerate any free-thinking, and its flunkys began to persecute Likhachev for his democratic views and his open sympathy with the progressive-minded studentry. As a result Likhachev was compelled to emigrate to Stockholm.

the creative spirit of the Revolution. This humanistic power of creation with which Lenin's programme of struggle for people's happiness is infused is what compels Ivan Akimov, who has miraculously escaped death and is hiding out in Fedot Bezmaternykh's winter hut, to explore the surrounding taiga and swamps risking his life, to draw up a map and mark his discoveries on it for future generations to use.

In their wanderings about the taiga, described with *picturesque details against beautifully painted scenery*, the experience of Fedot Bezmaternykh, an old taiga dweller, complements the knowledge of Akimov, a young scientist who tries to explain and generalise the facts and phenomena they come across.

Preceding these scenes is the chapter about Lakhachev, about the happenings that brought him to Stockholm, and the battle of interests raging round him. The action which began in a remote taiga village shifts to large towns in Russia and Europe. The narrative embraces diverse social strata: Russia's population—peasants, merchants, intellectuals, officials, professional revolutionaries, and students.

Ivan Akimov and Katya Ksenofontova are the two central characters whom the author brings to the forefront in the picture of the acute struggle fought by the two opposing forces.

The first part of Book I is called "Escape" in which the line Akimov-Lakhachev gets a start, and the second part called "Katya" tells us how Katya Ksenofontova travelled from Petrograd to Siberia with the assignment to hand Akimov his documents—a passport, for one thing—and help him to get away to Stockholm. It is imperative for them to meet, but as both Akimov and Katya are "illegals" hunted by the authorities, they run a mortal risk in going towards this encounter. And it is in these dangerous situations in which they inevitably find themselves that their strength of character is challenged.

The rendering of the novel's main idea demanded a broad historical background, a depiction of happenings and

the creative spirit of the Revolution. The boundless power of creation with which Lenin's programme of struggle for people's happiness is infused is what comes from Akimov, who has miraculously escaped death and is hiding out in Fedot Bermatemykh's winter hut. He explores the surrounding taiga and swamps making his sketches, draw up a map and mark his discoveries on it for his generations to use.

In their wanderings about the taiga, described in picturesque details against beautifully painted scenery, the experience of Fedot Bermatemykh, an old taiga dweller, complements the knowledge of Akimov, a young man who tries to explain and generalise the facts and phenomena they come across.

Preceding these scenes is the chapter about Likhachev about the happenings that brought him to Stockholm, and the battle of interests raging round him. The action which began in a remote taiga village shifts to large towns in Russia and Europe. The narrative embraces diverse social strata of Russia's population—peasants, merchants, intellectuals, officials, professional revolutionaries, and students.

Ivan Akimov and Katya Ksenofontova are the two central characters whom the author brings to the fore front in the picture of the acute struggle fought by the two opposing forces.

The first part of Book I is called "Escape" in which the line Akimov-Likhachev gets a start, and the second part called "Katya" tells us how Katya Ksenofontova travelled from Petrograd to Siberia with the assignment to hand Akimov his documents—a passport, for one thing—and help him to get away to Stockholm. It is imperative for them to meet, but as both Akimov and Katya are "illegals" hunted by the authorities, they run a mortal risk in going towards this encounter. And it is in the dangerous situations in which they inevitably find themselves that their strength of character is challenged.

The rendering of the novel's main idea demanded a broad historical background, a depiction of happenings and

hunting lodge and helps him to understand the real-
the real work of Siberia and the real Siberians.

When his two characters come across each other
together, cowboys, merchants, peasant troops,
prospective hunters, political exiles? What difference
what tragedy he encountered in Siberia's reflection.

The spiritual closeness and the growing need of
of Berdmaykh and Akimov are both logical and
logical. In the person of Akimov, Berdmaykh sees
Revolution itself, as it were, he accepts it and, every
supreme justice with his heart, entrusts to it the
edge of Siberia's innumerable suffer, accumulated
generations.

In the intertwinement of these three lives—
termykh, Akimov and Likhachev—the writer attains the
measure of artistic generalization.

As typical in its own way is the life story of each
intellectual, selfish Fyodor Gorbyakov, an exiled
seasonal underground revolutionary. The beating to
that fell to his lot have left him with unhealing wounds
he cannot forget his wife whose memory he will be
unblemished. And there is his motherless daughter
to bring up. Still, his troubles and misfortunes do not
shatter his will to live and to fight, nor dam the work of
him. He remained as responsive as ever to the needs of
others and his helping hand could be relied upon then.
His nobleness is made evident in his relations with Gufa.
the woman he has once saved from death and helped
come to terms with life.

In the image of Fyodor Gorbyakov who held the
threads of underground activity in his hands, being a
member of the Naryn underground committee of Baidi-
viki and the liaison between the Party organisations of
Tomsk, Moscow, Petrograd and Naryn, we can clearly see
a whole stratum of dedicated revolutionary intellectuals.
This image embodies the great humaneness of the ideal
professed by the Revolution, and in the personality of
Fyodor Gorbyakov we see a fusion of a man's mind

biography of George Murton's own . . .
in defence of justice, extraordinary physical strength,
devotion, hunting luck, a keen interest in people
in unexplored places.

One of the men who help Katya to understand
sufferings of the Siberian peasantry for a new, just
Oksenty Sushchik, a "forest philosopher", a sage
preaches that man must seek an inner liberation from
in the face of any trial sent him by fate.

While hiding out in this old man's forest hut, Katya
strives to clarify for herself what his credo is. Oksenty
laid out before her the philosophy he has worked out for
which is a fanciful combination of stoicism, Tolstoyism
and anarchism. Katya realises that he is one of those
people who are not so very rare in Russia: a seeker
truth, an inventor of a special manner of living, an
experimenting creating a universal happiness for all people
earth. He inspires sympathy and respect, but she knows
that people like him are incapable of socially transforming
Russia or even starting it on the road to anything like
new life.

The theme of revolutionary heroism is closely linked
with the image of this girl. The author lovingly portrays
this charming young revolutionary who displays courage
and staunchness, and the gift of genuinely endear
herself to people. Ivan Akimov and Katya belong to the
part of the revolutionary intelligentsia which feels fused
with the masses and thus derives its certainty in the neces
sity of the coming revolution.

The first book ends with Katya's letter to her brother
in which she says: "The sum total of my impression is
this: people in Siberia long for the revolution, they are
waiting for it and will undoubtedly support us." She also
tells him that Professor Likhachev's papers are in the
keeping of one of his guides, and promises to do every
thing to send them on safely.

We are now waiting for Katya and Ivan Akimov to
meet, but are afraid that they will have many difficulties

to surmount first. That is because they have chosen a difficult lot in life by dedicating themselves to the struggle, and then it is a difficult time they are living in.

Looking to the Future

The heroes' participation in the revolutionary struggle and the obstacles and dangers they are confronted with and courageously overcome make the fascinating plot of the novel and also the inner spring which propels the action.

The author traces the development of his heroes' characters, the richer for the moral strength they acquire in the revolutionary struggle, and in this respect the image of Polya is of the greatest importance.

Much water will flow under the bridges after that day, in the beginning of the novel, when Polya saves the fugitive out of pity, kindness, and a natural impulse to help someone in distress, knowing nothing about him and only guessing that he was "against the tsar", seeing that the "servants of the tsar were after him". It will be a long time before she consciously joins in the revolutionary struggle. Even after living in the Krivorukovs' house for some time she still clings to her illusions and her young dream of building up a good, honourable life with her husband Nikifor. She does feel the oppressive atmosphere of her parents-in-law's home and longs to go back to her father and a different way of life, but that is as far as it goes for the time being. She dreams of going back to her father's home with her husband, they'd have a little boy or a little girl and live happily ever after.

Polya's feelings are typical for many of Markov's heroes who arrive at revolution haltingly and slowly. They dream of a better, fairer, cleaner life, a life of toil, closeness to nature, good relations with people, and family joys. However, reality shatters their illusions one by one, and in the turbulent times of approaching revolution this process, once it has begun, goes at a breathtaking pace.

When Nikifor is murdered, the veil drops from Poly's eyes, she sees the Krimchaks in their true colors and is appalled by the violence to which people can sink in pursuit of wealth and power.

A terrible picture of avarice, deceit, and dishonesty unfolds before her in all its ugliness. She realizes that honesty, fairness, respect for working people and acts of mutual assistance are quite incompatible with a system for accumulating wealth which is the power that upsets the whole order of life. And then she begins to perceive the cruelty and injustice of such an order and the need to change it. There is also the matter of the "hole" which makes a special impression on her.

"Since early childhood," says the author, "Polya knew that these holes on the Ob were a great treasure trove. A hole would get so packed with expensive 'red' fish that whole villages joined forces to pull it out. For the people finding a 'hole' was like finding a buried treasure, a catch tiding them over when food was short. For them a 'hole' was just profit, more money, a piece of luck."

Finding such a hole along the thousand-verst length of the river was such a tricky business that few succeeded. But when someone did find it—either through chance or special knowledge of the river—he could not claim it for himself alone; it simply was not done. A hole was communal property, like the forest where everyone was free to hunt, like the lakes where everyone could fish. And so when Polya learns that her father-in-law had bought a hole wholesale from a thief who concealed his discovery from the community and thus himself became a thief, she is shaken.

She confides her thoughts to her father, keeps nothing back, and also tells him that she has long guessed that he was "at one with many exiles" and was hiding the chap (Akimov) she had happened upon when he was being hunted like a wild beast.

Gorbyakov understands his daughter's state of mind and realizes that he must tell her the whole truth, and he

obstacles and dangers, and it is he who must reach
get to Professor Likhachev in Stockholm. This is
entirely in accordance, as it were, the entire part of
novel with its villages, hunting lodges, forest tracks and
highways, a provincial town, and all those different places
encountered by Akimov and Katya. The plot comes to
closure when these two finally meet, and end with
Akimov arriving in Stockholm, to find that his
Likhachev has in the meantime died.

But in a certain sense a plot is more than a set
connected events, it also reflects the inner development
of the novel's main idea, its philosophical conception,
the passion of its message. In Akimov and his actions
embodied the ideas of the revolution, the destruction
the old order, and the programme of building up a new
society, a programme which includes the development
science and the country's productive forces, based on
exploration and rational exploitation of its natural wealth.
The historical optimism of the novel is evident in this
philosophical conception of revolution.

The last part of the novel tells us about Akimov and
Katya meeting at long last. Stepan Lukyanov brings
Akimov to Okenty Svobodny's hut in the tundra and leaves
him alone with Katya. Here, the author seems to slow
down the rhythm of his narrative deliberately in order to
give Akimov and Katya a chance to open their hearts to
each other undisturbed. It is here, in this hut, that
Lukyanov (who was the guide in Professor Likhachev's
party) hands over to Akimov the bundle of maps, diaries
and notes of great scientific and practical value to be shown
to the professor in Stockholm. Thus, towards the end
of the novel, the alliance of Akimov and Likhachev
comes an expression of revolutionary tendencies which
grows in historical significance.

When Akimov finally reaches Stockholm he learns
that Likhachev, feeling that he was not long for this
world, wanted to go home to Petrograd, which Frolov
helped to arrange, and there he died. Akimov and Pr

***A Great Son of the Party and the People.
On the 75th Birthday of Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev***

The name of Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev is pronounced in our days with respect and affection by everyone who holds dear the peace and happiness of people. Contemporary mankind always associates with his name the indefatigable struggle of the Communist Party and the Soviet state for consolidating peace among nations, for strengthening detente, and for the triumph of Lenin's ideals of a communist brotherhood of people.

Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev, a true son of the Communist Party, a consistent continuator of the great Lenin's cause, an outstanding political leader of our day, sets an example of dedicated service to the people at all the posts entrusted to him by the Party and the state. Today, when we trace the course of his life, stage by stage, and re-read his works, we understand better than ever before the laws of socio-historical development, we ponder on the past, present and future of our Motherland, and receive an enormous charge of spiritual energy which allows us to confidently advance to Communism, surmounting all the difficulties in our path.

We remember the words of Comrade Brezhnev, the ardent avowal of a Communist-Leninist, with an inspiring feeling of pride in our socialist epoch and in our great Soviet people from whose midst come such loyal fighters for the happiness of mankind. Leonid Ilyich said:

new delivered at the 23rd, 24th, 25th and 26th Party Congresses, in his works, autobiographical books, speeches and salutatory addresses to the Writers', Artists' and other creative unions, a scientific and principled analysis is given of the main trends in the development of literature and the arts, an impressive picture is painted of the steady progress made by our multinational Soviet culture, and far-reaching tasks are proposed. Comrade Brezhnev's statements on questions of literature and art, his views on the traditions of Russian and world culture, and on the innovatory character of the method of socialist realism combine into an integral ideological, moral and aesthetic programme.

The core or the basis of this embracing programme is Lenin's time-tested principle of the artist's social mission and the loyalty of the art and literature to the Party and the people.

In developing Lenin's well-known tenet that literature is an inalienable part of the proletarian cause, in generalising and analysing the experience accumulated by Soviet art and literature in the course of more than sixty years, Comrade Brezhnev in his works asserts that he views literature as a substantial factor in communist construction, and as a powerful ideologically-educative influence. "The social role of literature and art is enormous," he stresses again and again. "By truthfully portraying the life of peoples, progressive artists actively contribute to the national and social progress of their countries, to a wider exchange of artistic values and to better mutual understanding in the world."

This high assessment of their role and their tasks gives the Soviet writers and artists a new powerful stimulus to work for the good of the Party, of the whole people.

As long ago as 1905, Lenin proved in his classical work "Party Organisation and Party Literature" that there is not and cannot be any such thing as a literature committed to no party and no class. "One cannot live in society and be free from society," said the leader of the Great

Leonid Dyich has said: "...the confidence of the people places great responsibility on us".

Our creative, artistic intelligentsia are surrounded by truly fatherly attention, and to this inspiring code which we associate with the name and activity of Comrade Brezhnev they respond with a new upsurge of creative energy, ambitious projects, and books which render in imagery the heroism of our modern reality and the grandeur of the achievements and plans of the people - the builders of communism. "Such books," says Leonid Dyich, "enrich the people's social thinking and their memory of historic deeds, effectively further the instilment of Soviet patriotism and proletarian internationalism, and actively work against the ideology of imperialism and bourgeois morality."

Speaking of the essentially innovative features of the method of socialist realism, Comrade Brezhnev underlined the internationalist, multinational character of our literature. "The development of our multinational Soviet literature is inalienable from our working people's struggle for the triumph of communism," he said addressing the All-Union conference in Baku, held under the motto "Friendship of Nations Means Friendship of Literature". "Serving the great ideals which always inspired Soviet people to valiant labour and feat of arms, is the life of our literature, the source of its patriotic and international content."

Maxim Gorky and Vladimir Mayakovsky, the founders of Soviet literature, dreamed of a creative, mutually enriching union of writers of all the nationalities living in our country. And their dream has come true.

"I am telling about many people, but the main hero of my books is the Soviet people as a whole," wrote Leonid Dyich, presenting to Mexican readers his autobiographical books which evoked an enormous response everywhere in the world. His words express the essence of one of the most vital and determining traits of Soviet literature: its passionate, absorbing interest in the working man who by his deeds asserts his stand in life. The thought uppermost in the Soviet writers' minds is always of the people, of the

A Great Son of the Party and the People. On the 75th Birthday of Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev

The name of Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev is pronounced in our days with respect and affection by everyone who holds dear the peace and happiness of people. Contemporary mankind always associates with his name the indefatigable struggle of the Communist Party and the Soviet state for consolidating peace among nations, for strengthening detente, and for the triumph of Lenin's ideals of communist brotherhood of people.

Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev, a true son of the Communist Party, a consistent continuator of the great Lenin's cause, an outstanding political leader of our day, sets an example of dedicated service to the people at all the posts entrusted to him by the Party and the state. Today, when we trace the course of his life, stage by stage, and re-read his works, we understand better than ever before the laws of socio-historical development, we ponder on the past, present and future of our Motherland, and receive an enormous charge of spiritual energy which allows us to confidently advance to Communism, surmounting all the difficulties in our path.

We remember the words of Comrade Brezhnev, the ardent avowal of a Communist-Leninist, with an inspiring feeling of pride in our socialist epoch and in our great Soviet people from whose midst come such loyal fighters for the happiness of mankind. Leonid Ilyich said:

nev delivered at the 23rd, 24th, 25th and 26th Party Congresses, in his works, autobiographical books, speeches and salutatory addresses to the Writers', Artists' and other creative unions, a scientific and principled analysis of the main trends in the development of literature and the arts, an impressive picture is painted of the progress made by our multinational Soviet culture, as far-reaching tasks are proposed. Comrade Brezhnev's statements on questions of literature and art, his views on the traditions of Russian and world culture, and on the innovatory character of the method of socialist realism combine into an integral ideological, moral and aesthetic programme.

The core or the basis of this embracing programme is Lenin's time-tested principle of the artist's social mission, and the loyalty of the art and literature to the Party and the people.

In developing Lenin's well-known tenet that literature is an inalienable part of the proletarian cause, in generalising and analysing the experience accumulated by Soviet art and literature in the course of more than sixty years, Comrade Brezhnev in his works asserts that he views literature as a substantial factor in communist construction, and as a powerful ideologically-educative influence. "The social role of literature and art is enormous," he stresses again and again. "By truthfully portraying the life of peoples, progressive artists actively contribute to the national and social progress of their countries, to a wider exchange of artistic values and to better mutual understanding in the world."

This high assessment of their role and their tasks gives the Soviet writers and artists a new powerful stimulus to work for the good of the Party, of the whole people.

As long ago as 1905, Lenin proved in his classical work "Party Organisation and Party Literature" that there is not and cannot be any such thing as a literature committed to no party and no class. "One cannot live in society and be free from society," said the leader of the Great

ga I was eleven that year, and my father took me squirrel hunting for the first time in my life. Since then, during my ramblings in the taiga I heard amazing stories about the wonders of this land at hunters' and fishermen's camps.

I remember Melekha Vlasov, a hunter who had the next to ours, coming over to us. We sat in front of a drinking strong tea, flavoured with black currant leaf. Melekha and my father had a sort of contest as to which of them knew the taiga better.

"Have you ever been to the burch swamp in the cold winter, eh, Melekha?" my father challenged him. "You haven't? Well, I have. There are two rotten log stumps in the middle of that swamp. I was sking past one day, and what I saw was hot steam rising from them. I went closer, took off my mittens, and—wonder of wonders!—hot air as if from a bathhouse came from the stumps! I warmed myself for a while beside them, did a bit of hunting and went back home. At the time there was an exile living in our village, one of those who rose against the tsar. He was an educated man, an engineer perhaps. I said to him: 'There's wonder in the taiga, Mitrofan Mikheich, rotten stumps giving out heat!' The good Lord, it seems, has a thought to spare the hunters. If a hunter starts freezing he'll have somewhere to get some warmth back into his bones.' Mitrofan Mikheich laughed and said: 'God has nothing to do with this. There must be hot streams running in the ground. The larch has deep roots, and the steam is seeping through the openings they have bored.' I said: 'Look, Mitrofan Mikheich, how about building a bathhouse right there?' 'Building a bathhouse is no problem,' he said. 'The problem is piping up the hot water from down deep. That will take long pipes. You can't do much with just an axe and a shovel. You wait until overthrow the tsar, the people will take the power into their own hands, we'll make all kinds of machines. And then we'll get down to those hot streams and build bathhouses here too.'"

the property of the state of workers and peasants. Then, Tolstoy's books have found their way to the remotest corners of our vast land. According to the figures of the All Union Book Chamber, since the establishment of Soviet power Tolstoy's works have been published 100 times in our country with a total of 97,906,100 copies. The minorities which in tsarist Russia eked out a precarious existence and were catastrophically dying have been regenerated in conditions of the Soviet system. They are now enjoying a healthy, meaningful life. They have been given access to education, to the achievements of science, culture, and also to Lev Tolstoy whose books have been translated into 82 languages. The great writer who devoted his life to working for the people attained a popularity and influence possible only in a society of working people who have forever freed themselves from social and national oppression and have taken up the new, socialist life.

2.

In his article "L. N. Tolstoy" published fifty years ago, in November 1910, Lenin wrote:

"L. N. Tolstoy emerged as a great artist whose work was still held away in the land. In a series of great works which he produced during the more than half a century of his literary activity, he depicted mainly the old, pre-revolutionary Russia which remained in a state of serfdom even after 1861—rural Russia of the landlord and the peasant. In depicting this period in Russia's history Tolstoy succeeded in raising so many great problems, he succeeded in rising to such heights of artistic power that his works rank among the greatest in world literature. The epoch of preparation for revolution in one of the most backward countries under the heel of the serfowners became, thanks to its brilliant illumination by Tolstoy, a step forward in the artistic development of humanity as a whole.

"Tolstoy the artist is known to an infinitesimal minority even in Russia. If his great works are really to

made the possession of *all*, a struggle must be waged against the system of society which condemns millions and scores of millions to ignorance, benightedness, drudgery and poverty—a socialist revolution must be accomplished **

Further he wrote:

"Tolstoy is dead, and the pre-revolutionary Russia whose weakness and impotence found their expression in the philosophy and are depicted in the works of the great artist has become a thing of the past. But the heritage which he has left includes that which has not become a thing of the past but belongs to the future. This heritage is accepted and is being worked upon by the Russian proletariat ***

And indeed, the weak and the secondary in Tolstoy's writings has receded into the past and has become mainly the object of study for his biographers and historians. This refers to his morally-philosophical works, to his sermon of non resistance to evil with violence, and his failure to understand the historical role of the working class. Soviet society made such a quick leap forward and such an amazing short cut to the realisation of the principles of social justice and the development of a free personality living in conditions of genuine human happiness that the reactionary character of Tolstoyism, its primitiveness and helplessness in the approach to life's problems became quite obvious. The great and the eternal in Tolstoy's writings, however, was readily taken up by Russia's proletariat and raised to an unprecedented height.

For decades the enemies of the working people maliciously asserted that it was incapable of understanding and appreciating the creations of the world's greatest artists. These sorry prophets pictured the revolution, which had raised the masses to a level of competent par-

*V. I. Lenin, "L.N. Tolstoy", *Collected Works*, Vol. 16, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1974, p. 323

***Ibid.*, p. 327

ticipation in their epoch's progress, as a humane in which civilization would perish, and the development of science, literature and art would come to an end. The success of socialist construction in the Soviet Union, at which the whole world stands amazed, has once and for all disproved their allegations, for it has shown convincingly that the people are the sole heir to all the cultural treasures created by mankind, and that no society ever existing in the world could have preserved all the achievements of culture with such care and used them to enrich people intellectually and morally, and to develop the finest traditions of the past, as it is being done by the socialist society of working people.

Tolstoy was more than simply a Russian writer. He was a patriotic writer who expressed the national distinctions of his own Russian people with all the power of his genius. His *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, *Resurrection*, *Cossacks*, *Hadji Murad*, *Sevastopol Stories*, *Childhood*, *Boyhood*, *Youth*, and many other masterpieces were written with a feeling of boundless love for Russia, for the Russian people. In these works, the life of a big nation flows like a deep and full river, reflecting all the complications, contradictions, strong and weak sides of the period described.

Tolstoy speaks passionately of the Russian people. He admires their industriousness, kindness, modesty, friendliness, justice, and their courage and heroism in defending their Motherland from foreign aggressors. He speaks in a tender, tremulous voice of the Russians' love for their country. We hear pain and bitterness in his voice when he gives a heart-rending description of the grinding poverty in Russia's villages and the plight of the down-trodden Russian peasantry. Tolstoy felt for the peasants and understood them so deeply, that he might have been one of them. No wonder Lenin once said in conversation with Gorky: "Before this Count there has never been a real peasant in literature."

Tolstoy seethes with wrath when he speaks of the

theirs can face up to any storms and misfortunes. It is, in fact, the source of heroism that lives in the heart of every person, and in the heart of a nation as a whole. Tolstoy's patriotism is near and dear to us, Soviet people living in the epoch of atomic energy and space flights and building an edifice of genuine human happiness—a communist society.

Through Tolstoy's work runs his dream of a life worthy of man. A hard realist, an artist with a profound understanding of people's earthly passions, Tolstoy for all his philosophical delusions promoted the liberation movement by asserting that human happiness was possible only as a general, people's happiness. He devoted some splendid pages to a comparison between the opulence of the minority and the hungry existence of the absolute majority.

Many of the images he has painted of the lower orders testify to the utter spiritual impoverishment to which serfdom had reduced the ordinary Russian people. Tolstoy wanted the people living on this earth to be fed and clothed, but besides worrying about their daily bread they also had to live a spiritual life, for without that there was no existence worthy of man. However, the ways which he proposed for bringing about man's material and spiritual welfare could not have solved these eternal problems. His various utopian recipes for land tenure in an exploiter society or, say, his preaching of spiritual self-improvement look helpless in a confrontation with the reality of complex social problems. Tolstoy was admittedly great, but he had his class and historical limitations and was therefore unable to correctly light the way to human happiness. This problem could be solved only by the new social forces brought to the fore by the course of historical development, and these forces were Russia's working class guided by its Marxist-Leninist party. Tolstoy did not understand these forces till the last.

Discarding Tolstoy's reactionary teaching on non-resistance to evil with violence and exposing Tolstoyism as

my dozens of volumes aren't worth a thing! "

John Galsworthy, a major English novelist who won worldwide fame for *The Forsyte Saga*, said: "In choosing a single novel to label with those words so dear to the confectioners of symposiums 'the greatest ever written' I would select *War and Peace*." And Romain Rolland, the outstanding French writer, said that for him *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, and *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* were more precious than some of the great works of French literature.

Many, many more such statements could be cited.

It is well known, for instance, what a tremendous influence Tolstoy had on the literatures of Slav nations. But his influence on Russian literature was the strongest, of course. We do not mean only the effect his mighty talent had on the manner of one or another writer, but—on the development of democratic social tendencies.

Tolstoy held that literature was a matter of the greatest importance. "In order to define accurately what is art," he said, "we must first of all stop regarding it as a source of delight, and look upon it instead as one of the conditions of human life. If we look upon art like that we shall not fail to see that it is one of the means of association among people."

In a letter to the poet Afanasy Fet in 1860 Tolstoy said: "The literature of a people is its full and comprehensive consciousness, reflected in which must be the people's love of goodness and truth as well as the people's contemplation of beauty in a given epoch of development."

Tolstoy resented attempts to divorce literature from the life of the people as a whole and turn it into an amusement for a narrow circle. It is well known how violently he disapproved of decadent poets and writers and their work. He held that the lofty mission of the writer and literature was to serve the people. With his statements on writing and more especially with his own work he contributed to the victory of those forces in Russian literature

which moved it in the democratic direction where it would serve the people and the progressive ideals of the time.

Tolstoy's contemporary Russian literature was greatly enriched by his traditions, and now Soviet literature is developing them as their rightful heir. Tolstoy's enormous creative experience is an unestimable wealth on which our writers draw freely in their striving for the highest artistic standards of our new, socialist-realist literature. From Tolstoy, Soviet writers learn the art of penetrating into the life of the popular masses, the techniques of rendering reality in artistic imagery, and they learn to be exacting towards their own work.

Tolstoy's experience is a laboratory of literary craftsmanship. One may safely say that all Soviet writers without exception handle the achievements concentrated in this laboratory with trepidation and esteem. No few works have been written by Soviet scholars showing the influence of Tolstoy's techniques on one or another of our authors, not only Russian ones but also writers belonging to the many different nationalities peopling the USSR.

Tolstoy is read everywhere, and his experience is not just our national asset—it belongs to the world.

During a recent visit to our country, Guido Piovene, a well-known Italian writer, attended a meeting held at the Soviet Writers' Union and spoke about Tolstoy's growing popularity among Italian readers and ever keener interest taken in his amazingly potent realism by Italian authors. Anatole France once said: "As an epic writer, Tolstoy is our common teacher." And that is also true today.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union has from the first ascribed great importance to fiction as a powerful means of education. In many Party documents, among them also the documents of recent years, the Party pointed out the need for Soviet writers to thoroughly study classical literature and creatively develop its best tradi-

tional Socialist realist literature, growing and becoming formed in the process of the struggle for the construction of a socialist society, is a new stage in aesthetic development. It is based on principles of truthfulness, commitment to the people and the Party which embody the invaluable experience of all progressive literature of the past and express the lofty designation of literature in the life of peoples in the new epoch, the epoch in which the ideas of communism are marching triumphantly across the world.

4

Leo Tolstoy's work forms an arena on which fierce ideological battles are fought till this day. Bourgeois ideologists are trying hard to adapt Tolstoy to their own aims and use his work to weaken the peoples' struggle for their liberation and happiness.

Lenin wrote: "By studying the literary works of Leo Tolstoy the Russian working class will learn to know its enemies better, but in examining the doctrine of Tolstoy, the whole Russian people will have to understand where their own weakness lies, the weakness which did not allow them to carry the cause of their emancipation to its conclusion. This must be understood in order to go forwards."

This statement also holds good today.

The main tactics of the enemies of the working class is to give prominence to Tolstoy's weak aspects, in other words to make him less of a realist writer than a philosopher, a preacher of non-resistance to evil.

Some bourgeois literary scholars and sociologists are trying to convince their readers that Tolstoy had never been a rebel, that he had never raised his voice against the propertied classes, against tsars, against the hypocrisy of

*V. I. Lenin, "Tolstoy and the Proletarian Struggle", *Collected Works*, Vol. 16, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1974, pp. 353-54.

religion, or against all the institutes designed to enslave the masses. Their strivings can be easily explained. We are living in an epoch of bold, revolutionary transformations and in an unprecedented activity on the part of the masses. In these conditions Tolstoy's books help the masses to develop their sense of human dignity, to see the monstrous injustices perpetrated by the enslavers more acutely, and work up a righteous indignation against oppressors of every kind.

An international congress dedicated to Leo Tolstoy was convened in Venice in June-July 1960. The most prominent Italian writers had been invited to work on the organisational committee, which testified, of course, to the seriousness of the forthcoming congress. Representatives from 20 countries assembled in Venice, among them a delegation of our Writers' Union. It is to be regretted that no representatives from other socialist countries had been invited, although it is generally known that Poland, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia, for instance, have their writers' unions and their reputed scholars of Tolstoy.

It was a very motley gathering: there were fewer writers and literary scholars than sociologists, politicians, representatives of the Catholic church, preachers of Tolstoyism, and so forth. A number of Russian literature scholars, well-known in the Western world, took the floor. It is an amazing thing that a good half of these speakers did not even touch upon Tolstoy's novels. Tolstoy interested them more as a moralist, a preacher, or a sociologist, as if it was not Tolstoy but some other person who created those masterpieces which never cease to fascinate mankind with their greatness. The few speeches dealing with Tolstoy's work on his novels were remarkable for their extreme eclecticism and non-existence of a scientific approach.

The speeches made by our Soviet delegates and the showing of the Soviet film about Tolstoy were received with enormous interest. At the closing session, the American representative admitted that the participation of the

Soviet delegation helped to raise the seriousness and scientific level of the congress, and to lend the Tolstoy celebrations in Venice a worthy character.

Bourgeois sociologists and literary scholars make a very special point of writing and speaking about Tolstoy's peaceableness, and about Tolstoy as the judge and reconciler of human passions. To be sure, Tolstoy loved justice and peace, but after all his humanism can't be enfeebled like that! In order to understand Tolstoy's humanism correctly, his work should be examined not in a trimmed and distorted shape, and his views should be derived not from single instances but from the main trends of his work. The main expression of his humanism lies not in his preaching of humility and submission to fate, but in his love of life, his vital activity, his protest against social injustice done to the human personality, and in exposing a system that promoted the spiritual and economic enslavement of people.

Tolstoy—the exposé of social evils, Tolstoy—the vehement opponent to wars, thus Tolstoy belongs to the peoples of the world, and till this day he serves progressive ideas, the struggle for peace in the world, the freedom and equality of all nations, their social and national progress. That is why Tolstoy's humanism (genuine, not counterfeit) cannot be dismissed from the spiritual life of people today and relegated to history. No, Tolstoy's humanism is with us, it is with mankind's struggle for a secure future, it is alive and active. Tolstoy held high the importance and dignity of man. This most important feature of his humanism is well attuned to our life and our struggle. And as for those so-called interpreters of his humanism and their efforts to adapt his erroneous preaching of humility and non-resistance to evil with violence to the interests of colonialism and exploitation, history will pass its verdict on them. The movement of peoples for their freedom and happiness cannot be stopped.

In 1909 Tolstoy planned to attend the congress of peace champions in Stockholm. "War is a nasty and crimi-

nal business," he said. Tolstoy's appeals for peace, and his furious opposition to war are especially evocative today when the biggest capitalist countries are going on with their monstrous arms, ignoring the desire of peoples for peaceful co-existence. Peace-loving forces can and must defeat the forces of war, achieve complete and general disarmament, and ensure lasting peace on earth.

* * *

In Volume 52 of Tolstoy's *Complete Works* there is a remarkable diary entry of his. After his usual walk in the environs of Yasnaya Polyana Tolstoy, then 66, wrote.

"As I approached the village of Ovsyannikovo, I looked at the lovely sunset. There was a gap in the piled up clouds, and there, in that gap, the sun—like a red, irregular triangle. It was over the forest, over the rye. A joyful sight. And I thought: no, this world is not a joke, not merely a vale of trial and transition to a better, eternal world, it is one of eternal worlds, beautiful and joyful, which we not only can but must make more beautiful and joyful for those living with us and for those who will live in it after us."

Soviet people—the multinational family of our country fused together by friendship and brotherly unity—guided by the omnipotent Marxist-Leninist teaching are translating the dream of the great writer into reality by creating the most beautiful, free and joyful society on earth.

1960

A Word About Shishkov

In our Russian literature there have been many authors about whom stories and novels can be and ought to be written. One of them is unquestionably Vyacheslav

to him: 'Come on, Fyodor, come to the Baya with me, you won't lose out. Good earnings, and the treatment you know—all kind and polite.' But my father was set on building a new house. My, how he cursed himself afterwards: 'Blast that cursed house to hell! It bound me hand and foot. The money I might have earned!' The money apart, he was sorriest to part with Yakovlevich. What a man he was—one of God's chosen. And the best-tempered, too.

He himself hailed from Russia, not Siberia, from a moneyed family. But he did not follow in his father's footsteps, no. His father was a merchant. When the son was born to him, his father rejoiced, thinking he'd have a helper in his business. But he'd have to think again, because his son was fated to become something else. Scholarly he was. When he finished his education he said to his father: 'Do not be angry, father, but my heart is not in the trading business.' And he left him forever, made a clean break. If it were someone else he'd head straight for Petersburg to make a career and go up in the world, but not he! He came to us in Siberia, to our forest wilds. Ah, well, everyone knows that Siberians welcome every good man with open arms.

'And so Yakovlevich started surveying the mers, looking for shoals and holes, and everything he found he marked off at once. There are more markings of his on the banks of the Ob and the Chulym than you can count. Before Yakovlevich came here, our steamers and barges sailed blindly down our rivers. They ran aground sometimes, and there was no hauling those steamers and barges back into deep water, even if you bust a gut trying. The cargo was unloaded into boats and taken ashore to lighten the ship, and only then it was pulled back into the stream. A terrible business, that. It's only three hundred versts from Tomsk to Kolpashevo but it took a ship five days to grope its way along. And after Yakovlevich went through with his survey party, combed the river, discovered all its ins and outs and put markings everywhere, a new life

experience and my own world outlook were clamouring more and more actively for recognition from me.

Why did I want to argue with Shishkov, what exactly did I disagree with him about? I had no answer at first. I pondered what I had read and listened hard to my inner voice, but still I did not know. I loved Shishkov's books as before, he remained one of my best loved contemporary writers, and yet the feeling that I was engaged in a mental argument with him persisted.

It was only much later, when I myself began to write, that I was able to explain conclusively my reasons for feeling like that.

Vyacheslav Shishkov devoted many pages of his original, brilliant writing to the horrors of ignorance and poverty, to the hopelessness and monstrous idiocy of life in an old taiga village. In his stories, the early ones especially, these horrors of wretchedness are so enormous that they seem as impregnable as a great mountain range. And because there is not a hint of light to pierce the gloom, they leave the reader with a feeling of despondence and hopelessness. And it was these pages that evoked the protest in my soul. I hardly remember the old, pre-revolutionary village. But people who had lived there in those days surrounded me for many years afterwards. From the experience of my family and my home village I knew a lot about that frightening time now gone forever, thanks to the socialist revolution. But something of that epoch I did see with my own eyes. I saw two Siberian kulaks beating an eighteen-year-old shepherd boy with whiplashes till he bled only because a pack of wolves had savaged a few sheep he was tending. From early childhood I remember the savage tradition that lingered for a long time in our taiga villages, I am speaking of the fist fights between two villages in which the entire male population, old and young alike, took part. I remember weeping women coming to our house which stood outside the village and, wailing at the top of their voices, implore my father, a bear hunter of rare physical strength, to intervene before mur-

with tense interest and some anxiety, I must admit, to see what he would write next. He was no longer young, you know. And I knew, of course, that some writers lost their creative energy towards their old age, they wrote less and if they did write at all the impact they produced was much weaker than before.

And then I heard that Shishkov was working on a historical novel *Emelyan Pugachov*. My first reaction was one of chagrin. Now, why did he choose that theme, honestly! A huge talent like his. He ought to raise the bulkiest problems of the present day, write about our life and our people, and here he was withdrawing into history! And, besides, so much has already been written on the subject.

Time passed. The novel did not appear. Re-reading or simply leafing through Shushkov's books, I paused in spite of myself and thought worriedly: where is it, that new novel about Emelyan Pugachov? Is it a failure? Does it mean that his talent is ebbing?

I shall never forget how I first saw Shishkov's *Emelyan Pugachov*. It happened unexpectedly and in somewhat unusual circumstances.

In 1938, I did a lot of travelling about Chulym country collecting material for the second part of my novel *The Strogovs*. I was eager to get down to work, for the material I was bringing back with me was very interesting indeed.

I boarded the Moscow-Vladivostok express at Izhmorka in the middle of the night. The train only stopped there for two minutes. I found a vacant berth, and settled down to sleep at once. Mindlessly, I glanced at the opposite berth and saw an unfolded and rolled up magazine sticking out from under the pillow of the sleeping elderly man. In a flash, I caught a few lines on which the light fell from the ceiling lamp and a sixth sense told me that it was Shushkov's *Emelyan Pugachov*.

How could I sleep now? And how get the book out from under that sleeping man's head? Wait till morning?

that happened in our literature, its joys, victories, short comings and failures. His statements on literature are full of admiration for our classics, and he always follows the work of his contemporaries with the warmest interest. The importance of his literary lessons, his school, cannot be fully assessed, but one can say with certainty that he is exerting a most beneficial influence on modern Russian literature and on all the national literature of the Soviet Union.

Mikhail Alexandrovich Sholokhov's seventieth birthday celebrations grew into a country-wide event. And may this love of his readers, running into millions and millions, pour fresh strength unto him to live and create.

1975

A Maître's Lesson

On one of my visits to Moscow I was told at Goslitizdat that the manuscript of my *Sirogova* had been read by Isaak Emmanuilovich Babel. I was, naturally, in a flutter. Since I did not expect the famous author to give me an appointment, I asked my friends to find out his opinion of me. One of them rang up Babel who promptly invited this friend and myself to dinner that same day.

After dinner we sat talking in the study of his cosy flat in Nikolo-Vorobyunsky lane. The lights were low, and our conversation flowed.

I wrote down the conversation afterwards, but unfortunately I forgot to put the date (I haven't made any amendments in my notes.)

"Isaak Emmanuilovich," I said "I came from Siberia, from Irkutsk which is five thousand two hundred kilometres away from Moscow. But I shall be frank: if that were to affect your opinion of my manuscript I would not be gratified by this conversation with you. A modern

"I hope that the need to know literature will come in spite of what you have said. Don't you think?" I asked.

"Obviously," Babel replied. "Bookishness and a knowledge of literature are quite different things. A knowledge of literature gives the writer a knowledge of an important sphere of life and an introduction to culture."

"I believe I have the right notion about all this," I said. "I can refer only to my own small experience. The manuscript lying before you was not 'created' by myself alone. It is the condensed experience of numerous people. I collected this experience from the world of peasant hunters and fishermen—a world I know and understand intimately. I have as many as twenty people of both sexes and different ages under my constant observation. I watch every movement in their lives. This helps me to see the general through the personal. Even when I begin to picture the past I mentally shift these people there, and then this past becomes as tangible as if I had lived it myself only yesterday. True, the distance separating these people from me makes it all rather difficult."

"So you see, life comes first with me, but for all that the role of books does not grow smaller and, on the contrary, becomes more and more important. Books keep me in a state of tension, they help me to see life more clearly and gain a deeper understanding of all its diverse aspects."

"Why don't you live in the village?" Babel asked.

"It would be better if I did, perhaps. But in order to

including every whole day and every night, and every hour and every minute.

I suppose you'll ask me how to spend each day? I don't know, my dear young man! No question. Every day would give me. But you have to be sure. You can't be sure on the instant. It takes training and practice. You may learn.

"That is my last effort," I said. "It is right that we should begin with small things." Why do the people at the publishing houses take their eyes off when I tell them that I started with a novel?"

"Literatures are raised by the people's mind," I said and laughed. Literature is a more delicate flower than it appears to such people. Every writer begins in his own way, and dispensing ready-made prescriptions is a harmful practice. Since you begin with a novel it means that such is the form in which you must express yourself. Many people argue that Carly began with short stories, that Carly advised beginners to write short stories. But they forget something else: no one supported those writers who began with a novel as enthusiastically as Carly.

"And for another thing. There are also these important facts in Russian literature. Tolstoy began with a novel, and Dostoyevsky began with a novel. One must not look upon the novel as something superior, and the short

As the subject of these papers had more personal
to me than any other, the one of the best and
most personal and the most interesting I had to see and
as I had only minutes to spare before I had to leave

I conversed with him for half an hour of it. He
told me that many of the papers had been submitted
to the editorial committee for review and approval
of the

I remember well that the writing of the
book of the history of the time he was I had some
of the most interesting and that he was already writing
for me

"It is agreed I shall be your chief" I said to the
editor. I believe in a strong and clear mind that is
the only one. He said laughing at the very end of the first
page

There is a magnificent library of the present and
past of the world that I know. He is interested in
the history of everything that has been in our history and
the atmosphere of this or that period, the world and
history of the future writers, the state of mind of different
people. He puts questions after questions to his readers
and has answered very carefully and about the time
and condition of the world.

He too had much to tell me. Since we are each
other but he had not asked so and so and so and so
so had written to him. An interesting article had appeared
in this or that newspaper or magazine. And so and so
had sent him his last book. He had read it. He had replied
briefly. He was sorry to say although there was a lot he
might have said. "Ah yes" An important novel had come
out in such and such a republic. A serious, knowing man
had told him about it. He must read it.

As our conversation flowed on I learnt many im-
portant details about our literary life, without knowing
which one simply could not be abreast of all the de-
velopments in it.

Now Fedin picked up from his desk a batch of papers

"Come in, come in. I can't wait to hear all about everything to me you, the newspaper of course. Sit down and tell me what's new in the literature? What questions are worrying our Party comrades? What are the problems appearing in the magazines?"

Konstantin and I talked all evening. Today's company was not new to us. Finally, it was our turn to ask him questions.

"How is your novel coming along?"

He came up, went over to his desk, looked at his desk, looked at his papers of manuscript with red pencil corrections all over the writing, and said in a loud voice:

"I've rewritten it all again. I thought I'd put in a new dose, but instead I had to erect a whole new wall. And then in a very low, confident voice: 'I'd promised faithfully he'd have it for the March issue and I've failed him.'"

His novel *The Conquerors* is out now. A powerful book.

Our multinational Soviet literature is very lucky to have such outstanding masters, such big talents, and such wonderful people like Konstantin Fedin in its great family.

